

JUAN RUÍZ DE ALARCÓN,  
CLASSICAL AND SPANISH INFLUENCES

by

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## FOREWORD

The idea for this study originated with Professor José María de Osma, of the Department of Romance Languages of the University of Kansas. To him I wish to express my deepest gratitude for his generous and untiring assistance. Also I appreciate greatly the many valuable suggestions offered by Professor L. R. Lind, of the Department of Latin and Greek, and Professor W. H. Shoemaker, Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages, both of the University of Kansas.

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## INTRODUCTION

Juan Ruíz de Alarcón has long been designated the Spanish Terence, the Classical poet of the Golden Age. Allusions to his classicism are frequent, comparisons are numerous between his work and that of Terence and Plautus. Many writers have merely concurred with the statement of Menéndez y Pelayo,<sup>1</sup> calling Alarcón el clásico de un teatro romántico, while others have sought additional evidence in its favor. Henríquez Ureña<sup>2</sup> styles Alarcón artista de espíritu clásico and this too has met with approval and support. But while claims to the classicism of Alarcón have mounted rapidly, the evidence has not grown accordingly, nor has it proven conclusive.

Before adopting wholeheartedly expressions such as Menéndez y Pelayo's clásico de un teatro romántico, succeeding phrases must be carefully considered. Sin quebrantar la fórmula de aquel teatro ni amenguar los derechos de la imaginación, adds the author. Henríquez Ureña qualifies his artista de espíritu clásico, saying, entendida esta designación en el sentido de artista sobrio y reflexivo. Alarcón's classicism must be viewed in the bright light of the romantic theater of Spain's Golden Age

1. Menéndez y Pelayo, Historia de la poesía hispanoamericana, Madrid, 1911, I, p. 64.
2. Henríquez Ureña, Nosotros, No. 9, Mexico, (marzo, 1914), p. 195.



as well as through the dark glasses of the classic tradition since classic rules, in maintaining their firmness, excluded most of the color of the Romanticists. Just how far Alarcón followed in the steps of Terence has not yet been determined, nor to what extent the classical influence guided his pen and shaped his comedias.

Alarcón stands within that group of traditionalists whose wish it is to portray social life and customs. Because Menander, Plautus and Terence were members of this circle, Alarcón has come to be considered their representative in Spanish literature.<sup>3</sup> Both Plautus and Terence are credited with furnishing a source of inspiration for the playwright, and attention is repeatedly called to quotations from Martial, Horace and Ovid to be found in his works.

The general opinion seems to be that because of Alarcón's familiarity with the Classics he built his plays along the same lines. Structure, technique, characterization, the presence of a moral purpose, the unities, all are pointed out as similarities between the comedias of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and the ancients. Plautus y Terencio, especialmente este último, influyeron en la estructura del teatro.<sup>4</sup> Sources of ideas and even inspiration have been freely added to these generalizations, until it becomes necessary to analyze them in the light of both Roman Classical and Spanish Golden Age writings.

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3. Henríquez Ureña, op. cit., p. 196.

4. Jiménez Rueda, Julio, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y su tiempo, Mexico, 1939, p. 42.

Alarcón's conception of the theater differed from that of any other dramatist of his time. His was a distinctly personal comedia, as examination of his plays will demonstrate. Where Lope lyricized and Tirso mimicked, Alarcón put on paper his hopes and his frustrations.

The theater of the Spanish seventeenth century had been poured long since into the mould of Lope de Vega. He it was who had created the national comedia, the theater of fantasy, passion, chivalry and lyricism, by uniting elements already existent in Spain. He was the idol of Madrid, his word was law, his pen dripped comedias as easily as his skilful brain conceived them. Lope was the comedia, he lived his actions, knew his characters and put on the stage the spirit of the Spanish people.

In their drama, the Spaniards were then convinced of but one value, and that was bravery. The caballero was<sup>5</sup> born with it, all actions were founded upon it. They were possessed of a fanaticism for God, the King and their Lady, and exalted honor appeared to be more virtuous by far than virtue. Honor was the law. Love was usually passion, there was no gentler emotion. Fathers and sons ruled with an iron hand over damsels who were secluded and veiled in the daytime, only to admit a lover to their rooms at night. There were no mothers, as mother love was considered too sacred to appear in the comedia. The gracioso was the one

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5. Núñez de Arenas, Isaac, Comedias escogidas de Juan Ruíz de Alarcón, Edición de la Real Academia, Madrid, 1867, I, p. xi.

to amuse the audience and furnish comic relief. The servant represented the common people, he reflected his master and helped at the same time to unravel the threads of the action.

Such were the elements of the Spanish stage when Alarcón made his first attempts to produce comedias. The number of plays written by Lope de Vega alone must have seemed an overwhelming discouragement to one so inexperienced. Quantity was the taskmaster, with other dramatists following Lope in choosing subjects from national history and legend, episodes of ancient or medieval history. Alarcón could not hope to compete with the fecundity of the great ones of his time, nor to make an impression against Lope's near thousand comedias. Hence he turned to the comedia of morals, subordinating the more complicated romantic intrigue and accentuating the development of character as will be shown.

He perhaps felt that the Classics which he knew so well might give him valuable ideas. He had studied them at his native University of Mexico, as well as maintaining an interest in them through later years. The Classics still held an influence upon the seventeenth century dramatists despite Lope's disavowal of them and it was even now traditional for Spanish writers to consult them.

In the life of Juan Ruíz de Alarcón we find much bitterness and disappointment. Of noble Mexican stock, the

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6. Owen, A. L., La verdad sospechosa, D. C. Heath and Company Edition, 1928, Introduction, p. 14.

little hunchback sought a political commission in Spain, but his physical deformity was too much against him. He was made the object of ridicule and the subject of countless cruel paragraphs and poems. His pretensiones were derided, and, desperate for money, he began to write, as he said, not como lícitos divertimientos del ocio, sino como virtuoso efecto de la necesidad en que la dilación de mis pretensiones me puso.<sup>7</sup> The term zalamero so scathingly applied to Alarcón by his contemporaries indicated a ceaseless wheedling and flattering of those capable of helping him politically. He took up his writing, then, not through desire but of necessity, hoping thus to attract the attention of influential and prominent people.

His affliction not only shut him away from life, love and adventure, it cast a shadow over his theater. Always it was in his mind, constantly he endeavored to equalize it, to substitute greatness of spirit, to make up for what nature had done to him. In the words of Jiménez Rueda, de ahí nace ese afán de justificar, con la belleza del espíritu, la fealdad corporal. Esta amargura se convirtió en la filosofía que se expresa por la boca de los personajes de su teatro.<sup>8</sup>

That Alarcón spoke through his characters, that

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7. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 130, note 6, Primera parte de las comedias de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Madrid.

8. Ibid., p. 183.

he included a moral, is plain. But how much of this was due to his resentment, his bitterness, his isolation? By tendency and necessity an introvert, he must turn to books for the events that others experienced in reality and so must find in writing his opportunity for self vindication. His moral philosophy, consequently, was not disinterested.<sup>9</sup> Alarcón was not by nature humble nor modest.<sup>10</sup> Proud of his lineage, his education, he sought to rebuke those who scorned him and to show them that he could succeed. His hopes for this success lay in putting before the public a comedia not cut to the pattern of Lope and his followers, but one of more serious mien, one that would stand forth by reason of contrast and justify faith in his individuality.

The best comedias that Alarcón produced are those in which he parried the thrusts of his critics. As a rule, he holds his bitterness well in hand, but when he does ease the check rein upon his emotions, his resentment takes command. The enemies of his heroes are the slanderers of Juan Ruíz de Alarcón. The evils punished in his plays are those of which he had felt the sting, and the don Juan who emerges with flying colors from the battle against riches, intrigue and physical superiority is the Juan that Alarcón so longed to be but could not reach.

In building his comedia de costumbre Alarcón made use of various elements. First, his legal training

9. Barry, Edouard, La verdad sospechosa, Paris, p. xxxi.

10. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 189.

(he had worked toward the degree of Doctor of Laws before leaving Mexico), next his classical studies, and last but not least his innate psychology. The legal training enabled him to develop action clearly and logically, to write concise thoughts. The Classics gave him some unity of action, attention to detail and a certain seriousness of purpose. His psychological insight, new to the theater but inherent in him, made it possible for him to portray characters accurately.

The comedia de costumbres was not original with Alarcón. His role was to polish and perfect this genre, used by both Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina. His treatment of the comedia was subjective, his characters show a new depth of independence, and these are the qualities that bring individuality to his work.

This study will analyze Juan Ruíz de Alarcón's conception of the comedia as regards structure, technique, characterization and ideas. The plays of Plautus and Terence will be reviewed and those thought to have an influence on the plays of Alarcón will be so compared. Special attention is to be paid to comedias resembling those of Lope de Vega or other seventeenth century Spanish writers, in an effort to ascertain the real source of Alarcón's ideas and the true background for his success.

## CHAPTER I

### ALARCON AND PLAUTUS

The first part of the *Comedias* of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, containing eight plays, appeared in Madrid in 1628. In 1634 the second group was published, containing twelve comedias.<sup>1</sup> Hartzenbusch lists twenty-seven as the total of plays ascribed to Alarcón, while S. Griswold Morley<sup>2</sup> places the number at twenty-four. For the purposes of this study Mr. Morley's opinion, based on versification, has been chosen.

In regard to chronology, Mr. Morley<sup>3</sup> finds that meter and versification do not substantiate the table furnished by Hartzenbusch, nor Henríquez Ureña's selection of the year 1614 as a dividing line between Alarcón's apprenticeship and maturity. "One must know the certain dates of a few plays at the beginning, middle and end of an author's career. For Alarcón these points upon which<sup>4</sup> to plot a curve are not available."

Alarcón's plays need not be divided in this instance with regard to dates but may be grouped according

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1. Biblioteca de autores españoles, XX, p. 8.
  2. Morley, S. Griswold, Studies in Dramatic Versification, University of California, 1918, VII, 3, p. 131-9.
  3. Ibid., p. 149.
  4. Loc. cit.

to purpose, technique, character study shown and success achieved. Claims of classical influence are based chiefly upon moral purpose and characterizations; hence the field must necessarily be limited to those comedias which fall within such boundaries.

In the comedia de carácter, so well developed by Juan Ruíz, are set forth most clearly the dramatist's ideas and ideals of the theater. This group most nearly approaches the perfection to which Alarcón aspired. As character study we can place La verdad sospechosa, Las paredes oyen, La prueba de las promesas, Mudarse por mejorarse, El examen de maridos, No hay mal que por bien no venga and Los favores del mundo.<sup>5</sup> Alarcón's psychological insight is at its best in plays such as these, in which he most realistically traces living characters and presents scenes with consummate skill. His drama is powerful, his comedy restrained. Within this type, though not in all instances, he accomplishes the straightforward presentation of one action, with the personification of human vices and virtues.

Two of Alarcón's successful comedias resemble conspicuously the capa y espada type so popular during the siglo de oro. Los pechos privilegiados and Ganar amigos both revolve about the pundonor, the absolutism of the men of the household and the inalienable rights of the king.

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5. Division suggested by Juan Hurtado y J. de la Serna and Angel Gonzalez Palencia, Historia de la literatura española, Madrid, 1932; and found upon examination to be a sound basis for grouping of plays.



It is not with Latin plays, then, that these should be compared, but with the Spanish comedia.

El semejante a sí mismo, El desdichado en fingir, La cueva de Salamanca and La industria y la suerte demonstrate the failure of Alarcón to achieve success in the field of pure intrigue. Here are seventeenth century comedias, built along the same lines as those of his fellow dramatists, but which noticeably lack their sparkle, their swift and spontaneous naturalness. Lope de Vega gave a vivid cross section of Spanish life, Tirso mimicked and satirized it. Alarcón had to concentrate upon a singleness of purpose and of character before he could make himself their rival in the art of creation. These four plays do not show such intention, but give evidence of seventeenth century influence and must be analyzed accordingly.

Comedias outside these three groups are conceded to be of a type far removed from the character studies of Alarcón. Dealing as they do with subjects pertaining to religion, history, fantasy, tragedy and vengeance, they represent Alarcón's attempt to enter the field of nationalistic literature. In the main he was not successful. His technique did not lend itself to intrigue and fantasy, nor could he show in this realm his true talent. Because of the lack of any connection with classical or character

study these plays will not be treated in detail.

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An examination of the theater of the Greeks and the subsequent writings of the Romans shows us three types of comedy: Old, Middle and New. The Old Greek Comedy was devoted chiefly to satire and the abuse of individuals.<sup>7</sup> New Comedy swings from laughter toward the serious and here we find Menander<sup>8</sup> and evidences of the beginning of the costumbrista type. In Middle Comedy there is a mixture of the old and new, forming a transition from one to the other.

Middle Comedy did not give up satire, nor did it pay especial attention to poetic diction. Rather did it concentrate on plot. It is here that Plautus finds a more likely place, whereas Terence stands with Menander as a portrayer of the New Comedy. The plays of Terence (with possibly one exception) are taken "wholly from the original Greek of Menander."<sup>9</sup> The Greek originals used by Plautus are not so clearly determined, but fragments of Menander are shown in some, giving rise to the assumption that Plautus was influenced by both New and, largely, Middle Comedy.<sup>10</sup>

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6. El anticristo, La crueldad por el honor, El tejedor de Segovia - 2nd part, Quien mal anda en mal acaba, La culpa busca la pena, Los empeños de un engaño, La manganilla de Melilla, Todo es ventura, La amistad castigada, El dueño de las estrellas, Quién engaña más a quién.

7. Cooper, Lane, Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 1922, p. 23.

8. Loc.cit.

9. Terence, Loeb Classical Library, (John Sargeaunt), 1920, I, pp. 2, 19, 233, II, pp. 123, 215.

10. Plautus, Loeb Classical Library, (Paul Nixon), 1924, I, pp. 5, 9.

The phrase "Plautus and Terence" has been used too casually with reference to Classical influence upon dramatists such as Alarcón and Tirso. The two Roman writers are not to be classed as partners<sup>11</sup> nor even to be considered parallel in their works. Terence represents comedy, Plautus gives us mostly farce. Their purpose, their technique and their character studies differ as greatly as do their resultant plays.

Plautus wrote for the people,<sup>12</sup> to amuse his audience and to gain an immediate laugh.. "If the joke mars the part, down with the part; if the ludicrous scene interrupts the development of the plot, down with the plot."<sup>13</sup> Dramatic construction was apparently the least of his worries, he was content to achieve a boisterous appreciation of his vigorous and rowdy farce.

To attribute to Plautus a moral purpose is neither logical nor plausible, and to say that Plautus is más moralizador que Terencio<sup>14</sup> is absurd. Plautus left the<sup>15</sup> question of morals to others while he concentrated on atrocious situations and disreputable characters. The few

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11. Norwood, Gilbert, Plautus and Terence, New York, 1932, p. 3.

12. Collins, Lucas W., Terence and Plautus, New York, 1883, p. 34.

Norwood, op. cit., p. 19.

Wright, Frederick A., Three Roman Poets, London, 1938, p.39.

Sellar, W. Y., The Roman Poets of the Republic, Oxford New Edition, 1881, p. 165.

13. Nixon, Paul, op. cit., I, p. xi.

14. Pérez, Elisa, Introducción a un estudio comparado del teatro de Alarcón y el de Plauto y Terencio, Kansas University, (In Edit), pp. 2, 40.

15. Westaway, K. M., Original Element in Plautus, Cambridge, 1917, p. 67; Sellar, op.cit., p. 215; Wright, op.cit., Preface, also p. 41.

passages which may be considered as moralizing are clearly  
<sup>16</sup>commonplaces and have no real connection with the dramatic  
situation. The fact that they are not even Roman in quality  
<sup>17</sup>or reference would indicate that Plautus merely translated  
such phrases from his Greek originals.

As a translator, Plautus was perhaps at his best,  
<sup>18</sup>as a dramatist at his worst. His diction and rhythm were  
excellent, his dialogue pungent and sparkling. But when he  
strove to be original, to introduce his own dramatic tech-  
nique, he became careless and even tedious.

<sup>19</sup>Mr. Norwood, in his study of Plautus and Terence,  
suggests four elements by which a playwright's quality may  
be judged: theme, plot-construction, characterization,  
verbal style (including dialogue). These four elements may  
help to explain the many structural and technical differences  
between Plautus, Terence and Alarcón.

Plautus' theme was much the same as that of  
Terence because both took from the Greek, but it was in the  
treatment of the theme that they differed. Dramatic con-  
struction was of no importance to Plautus. He emphasized  
the slap-stick variety of humor, shocking situations and  
shady characters. He wanted laughs and he got them. The  
theme itself was incidental and Plautus bothered no more with  
it after once having shaped it to his needs.

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16. Norwood, op. cit., p. 60.  
Sellar, op. cit., p. 178.  
17. Norwood, op. cit., p. 61.  
18. Ibid., pp. 4, 53, 99.  
19. Ibid., p. 54.

The majority of the twenty comedies of Plautus have as their subject the love affairs of young Athenians with slave girls or courtesans. The young men have no money with which to purchase their mistresses, who in turn are about to be sold by the leno or forced into service elsewhere. The slave comes to the rescue with a form of trickery whereby money is obtained from the young man's father or from the braggart captain wishing to buy the girl. The heroine then proves to be of Athenian birth and the hero may marry her. In some instances the courtesan has charge of the deception, in others the father attempts to secure for himself the affections of the son's mistress.

The Curculio depicts the adventures of a parasite by the same name who steals a ring from the usual braggart captain. With this ring he obtains money from the banker Lyco; these tricks being for the purpose of buying for Phaedromus his sweetheart Planesium. When the captain arrives he is in a mood to send all concerned to jail, but finds that Planesium is his long lost sister and accordingly marries her to Phaedromus.

The Casina shows us a father and son quarreling over the possession of a slave girl. The Cistellaria and the Epiducus both deal with old gentlemen who find lost daughters in courtesans. In the Cistellaria the father again makes love to the girl betrothed to his son. The old man of the Epiducus is tricked into buying a slave girl, and with the commission thus procured the son buys himself a mistress.

The Asinaria pictures the embarrassment of a straying husband who is about to enjoy an evening with his son's mistress when discovered by his wife. The Bacchides presents sister courtesans entertaining two fathers who willingly replace their sons. The Mercator repeats the struggle between father and son for possession of the slave girl. The Miles Gloriosus brings to the braggart captain punishment for adultery after he has been thoroughly hoodwinked. In the Mostellaria we are treated to realistic details of Philematium's bath and toilet as performed on the stage, followed by an equally unvarnished banquet and lounging scene. Persa is a picture of the revolting procurer Dordalus and the manner in which he is outwitted at the hands of Toxilus, a slave. The subject and the conversation in this comedy are unusually well matched.

Of Plautus' two more serious plays, the Amphitruo differs most noticeably from the usual run of Plautine comedies and has in fact been called a tragi-comedy.<sup>20</sup> Jupiter comes from Heaven to assume the identity of Amphitryon so that he may gain possession of the latter's wife, Alcmena. Adultery is here as elsewhere, however, the ressort dramatique and Plautus cannot entirely forget his stock characters and comedy devices, as is evidenced by Sosia and Mercury.

The Epilogue of the Captivi shows us why this play does not follow Plautus' general trend: "This play

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20. Wright, op. cit., p. 84.

was composed with due regard to the proprieties: here you have no vicious intrigues, no love affair, no suppositious child, no getting money on false pretenses, no young spark setting a wench free without his father's knowledge."<sup>21</sup> And the Prologue: "It is not composed in hackneyed style, is quite unlike other plays, nor does it contain filthy lines that one must not repeat. In this comedy you will meet no perjured pimp or unprinciples courtesan, or braggart captain."<sup>22</sup>

Plot construction and technique with Plautus point to his indifference toward dramatic results. He hinders his action by obvious "padding,"<sup>23</sup> deliberately holding back the development of the play so that his characters may fill in with their typical buffoonery. The action itself is slowed down or even side-tracked by jokes and pranks, the climax and the dénouement are sudden and illogical. Scenes are losely put together, the motive usually pertains more to sex than to the development of the comedy.

"Characterization, strictly speaking, is hardly to be found in Plautus."<sup>24</sup> He portrays not individuals but types, such as the spineless young Athenian who can do nothing but wring his hands and beseech his slave to help him; the blustering father who hastily forgives and forgets his son's weakness and frequently goes off himself in

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21. Loeb Classical Library, op. cit., p. 567.

22. Ibid., p. 467.

23. Norwood, op. cit., p. 55.

24. Wright, op. cit., p. 33.

search of a mistress. The old slave, a favorite with  
Menander, is with Plautus a complaining nuisance.<sup>25</sup>

The type of character that Plautus best likes to  
draw is taken from the rogue's gallery.<sup>26</sup> These people  
are not respectable, they are in fact coarse and vulgar,  
but he gives them life and animation. The leno or procurer  
is one of Plautus' favorite types; parasites, soldiers of  
fortune, rascally slaves, cooks and moneylenders run the  
gamut of sly remarks from the risqué to the repulsive.

Among the women, few are virtuous. Most of them  
are slave girls, forced by their owners to become courtesans,  
or courtesans who care only for money and wine. "Plautus  
rarely introduces us to people male or female, whom we  
should care to have in the same house with us. A real lady  
seldom appears--the same is usually true of a real gentle-  
man."<sup>27</sup>

These points may well be contrasted with similar  
ones in the comedias of Juan Ruíz de Alarcón. As regards  
dialogue, the sparkling rhythm of Plautus' verse might appeal  
to Alarcón though such was not his style; the jokes and lewd  
remarks he would disdain. Alarcón was too serious, too  
dogmatic, too fastidious to take kindly to the lusty speech  
of Plautine characters.

In characterization, Alarcón found his true forte.  
He could portray a type and yet make of such type an

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25. Wright, op. cit., p. 33.

26. Loc.cit.

27. Nixon, Loeb Classical Library, op. cit., I, pp. xii, xiii.



individual. But in choosing his characters he did not draw upon the rogue's gallery so favored by Plautus. He did not take over the weakling son nor the unstable father of the Latin comedy. In the Captivi, one of the few plays of Plautus that may be considered more than farce, Hegio is an example of this type of father. He has punished his son Tyndarus severely, thinking him a disloyal slave. When he learns the identity of the boy, he is "miserable at having been so hard on him, if he is my own boy.....Oh, if it could only be undone." In the dramas of Alarcón one may look in vain for a father such as Hegio who would not punish his own son, kill him even, for the sake of honor. Honor is the Alarconian code, it is the heritage of the son and the responsibility of the father.

Beltrán:

Luego si vos  
Obráis afrentosos hechos,  
Aunque seáis hijo mío,  
Dejáis de ser caballero;  
--;Qué caballero y qué nada! II, 9

Honor is also a moving force, a motive in Alarcón's comedias. It helps to unify subject matter, part of which the dramatist chooses from the refranes so popular during the Spanish siglo de oro. We see it reflected in the poor young man whom Alarcón pictures as winning out against wealth, greed and dishonesty. It forms the basis of such Alarconian ideals as generosity and loyalty to the king, ideals which are constantly exemplified and lauded.

In the comedias de carácter of Alarcón, the women are virtuous, aloof and independent. One cannot imagine him

tolerating such characters as the old hag in the Curculio, Scapha of the Mostellaria or the two mothers of the Asinaria and the Cistellaria. To a mind as puritanical as his, the type of girl portrayed by Plautus would be highly distasteful; certainly it would offer no incentive toward that calm and disdainful dignity so idealized by Alarcón.

The question of a moral code can scarcely be raised as far as Plautus is concerned. "His moral is one of black and white, mostly black."<sup>28</sup> Alcmena of the Amphitruo, generally credited with being a moral character, receives very shabby treatment for the purpose of creating a farcical situation. Tyndarus of the Captivi is the only possible representative of the moral nucleus which grew to such great proportions with Alarcón.

It is in the Captivi that Plautus is said to give some indications of moralizing, in that he omits his usual love-intrigue and presents Tyndarus as one who suffers for a friend and for a cause. Tyndarus' moralizing, however, is made to seem superficial and even regretful, and at the same time he throws a questionable light upon Plautus' real intentions in this respect.<sup>29</sup> The platitudes uttered here are not convincing nor are they born out by the attitudes and actions of the characters.

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28. Nixon, op. cit., I, p. xiii.

29. Plautus, op. cit., pp. 491, 489, 503, 529, 495.

Philocrates has said:

whether he's alive now or not, of course  
you had better inquire below as to that, sir.

Tyndarus remarks:

The situation is saved! Now he not only lies  
but moralizes. p. 489. Lines 2,3,4,5.

Tyndarus asks of Philocrates:

don't be less true to me than I am to you.  
p. 503. Lines 23, 24.

His sense of condescending superiority asserts itself.

It is characteristic of poor beggars to be  
illnatured, and envy the well-to-do.  
p. 519. Lines 7, 8.

Hegio, the father, quotes: "A good deed done a  
good man yields a large return of good." Yet the good deed  
which Tyndarus performs brings him only chains and punish-  
ment and Hegio is the one who makes him suffer. When  
Tyndarus is finally rewarded, it is not for his sacrifice,  
but for his chance status as the son of Hegio. He is none  
too enthusiastic about the outcome.

Philocrates:

God bless you, Tyndarus!

Tyndarus:

And you, sir, for whose sake I'm undergoing  
this confounded experience.  
p. 563. Lines 27,28,29.

The Amphitruo and the Menaechmi have been  
particularly alluded to as furnishing a basis for the  
dramatic structure of Alarcón. Miss Elisa Pérez<sup>30</sup> states,

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30. Pérez, Elisa, op. cit., p. 1.

Tanto podría llamarse (Alarcón) nuestro Terencio como nuestro Plauto.....De uno y otro toma Alarcón. She bases her contention chiefly upon the employment by Alarcón of hidden identities in El semejante a sí mismo, El desdichado en fingir and Quién engaña más a quién. This confusion of identities she maintains springs from Plautus' Amphitruo, though she admits, la diferencia fundamental es que en la comedia de Alarcón un personaje toma doble forma, mientras que en la comedia de Plauto hay dos personajes con idéntica<sup>31</sup>  
apariciencia. The Menaechmi she also credits with suggesting confusion of characters, aunque la intriga tiene bastantes<sup>32</sup>  
diferencias.

The theme of Plautus' Menaechmi is thought to have appeared frequently throughout the theater of many countries. This confusion of twins came into the Spanish drama through two sources. The Italian version, the Calandra of Bebbiena, with its variations in sex and love interest, appeared about 1504 and enjoyed immediate success. In 1555 the first Castillian translation of Plautus' Menaechmi was published, followed by Juan de Timoneda's stage adaption in 1559. The latter also showed himself to be familiar with the Italian commedia dell'arte and gave evidences of Italian influence.<sup>33</sup>  
 The Calandra, followed by Gli'Ingannati and the Novela XXXVI of Bandello gave rise to the situations used by the majority of succeeding Spanish dramatists. Los engañados of Lope de

31. Pérez, Elisa, op. cit., p. 11.

32. Ibid., p. 12.

33. Stevens, Charles H., Lope de Vega's El palacio confuso, New York, 1939, pp. xvii, xviii.

Rueda and the cuento Felismena in the second book of the Diana of Jorge de Montemayor are important milestones in the development of the Italian comedy. Lope de Vega's El palacio confuso goes back to the theme of mistaken identity as treated by Timoneda's Los Menemmos, following his Spanish adaptation and bearing no direct resemblance to Plautus.

The Italian influence, which must be acknowledged as strong upon the early development of the Spanish comedia, reaches deep into the writings of Lope de Vega. He combines this current with those of the early Spanish drama, neutralizing and adjusting them to the fluency of his own technique. From this mingling of elements there emerges the typically Spanish and Lopean comedia de capa y espada.

Alarcón has not found it necessary to look elsewhere than to Lope for such themes of mistaken identity as he employs. When he uses it as a mainspring, it is in comedias which are but imitations of Lope and his avowed admirer Tirso de Molina. <sup>34</sup> Plays such as El semejante a sí mismo, Quién engaña más a quién, El desdichado en fingir, are modelled along these lines and show that Alarcón could be neither original nor successful in the field of intrigue. The theme of mistaken identity as he used it was Lope's ready-prepared formula, plus some added duplicities of Tirso.

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34. Cigarrales de Toledo, Madrid, 1621, p. 128.

The three comedias of Alarcón here compared with the comedies of Plautus are among those generally regarded as imitations of Lope and Tirso. Here are neither character studies nor simplicity of action, but seventeenth century comedias of intrigue. Alarcón abandons in them his serious purpose and seeks to emulate the Spanish capa y espada. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe criticizes these Alarconian plays severely,<sup>35</sup> suggesting as a title for El desdichado en fingir, Caer en las propias redes. Quién engaña más a quién, a<sup>36</sup> repetition of much the same theme, is called by Schack Comedia de intriga, propiamente dicha. El semejante a sí mismo appears to Fernández-Guerra y Orbe mal trazada, con situaciones demasiado libres, escasa de interés, porque le falta la unidad de acción.....con todos los defectos de una primera obra.<sup>37</sup> Hartzenbusch writes that he sees in<sup>38</sup> this group of plays aquel desenlace a lo Tirso de Molina. Julio Jiménez Rueda speaks of the fact that these comedias pecan del uso de cierto lenguaje que es propio de Fray Gabriel.<sup>39</sup>

It is evident that Alarcón became involved in too complicated situations to the detriment of his plays. In El semejante a sí mismo, not content with Juan's attempt to

35. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, Don Juan de Alarcón, Madrid, 1871, p. 58.

36. Schack, Conde de, Historia de la literatura y del arte dramático en España, Madrid, 1886, p. 30.

37. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, op. cit., p. 58.

38. Biblioteca de autores españoles, op. cit., p. 513.

39. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 269.

test the love of doña Ana by posing as his own cousin Diego, the author introduces the cousin's love for Julia, Julia's love for both Leonardo and Diego, Diego's love for Julia, Gerardo's love for Julia, Sancho's love for Inés and Inés' infatuation for Diego whom she thinks to be Mendo. The plot becomes a net of disguise and counter disguise until we wish for the clever hand of Tirso to resolve it. Not only does this play wander through a maze of intrigue such as was typical of Lope de Vega, but its circumstances are comparable with those of Lope's El acero de Madrid. The deception in both cases is outlined in a letter dropped by the heroine and the hero must pose as someone else in order to gain access to the family circle. The use of such deception was part and parcel of the intrigue of Lope and Tirso. Fingir was a word employed frequently by Tirso, and to great advantage, since it represented one of the dissimulations so skilfully laughed at by him.

The women here portrayed do not compare with the ones moving through the character studies of Alarcón. They seem to be trying to resemble the women of Lope, who gave their all for love, and at the same time to be as clever and designing as those of Tirso. As a result they are merely not convincing. Some of Alarcón's subjectiveness is apparent in El semejante a sí mismo when he criticizes the women of Madrid, complains of his own failure to obtain recognition, and utters glowing praises of his native Mexico. He refers again to the six years that he spent in

that land, away from Spain:

Tras de seis años de ausencia  
No es mucho haberse mudado. III, 16

It is possibly this same absence of which he speaks in his comedia Los favores del mundo. Hernando there says to his master:

Seis años ha que rodeas  
Aqueste globo inferior,  
Y no vi en su redondez  
Hermosura tan extraña. I, 1

Miss Pérez wishes us to believe that the coincidence of a six year period of time mentioned in Plautus' Menaechmi is responsible for a similar use of the term six years by Alarcón. To his master, who is seeking his brother, Messenio says:

Well, what's to be the limit hunting for him?  
This is the sixth year we've been at the job.  
p. 389. Lines 233-4.

Let us look carefully, however, at the life story of Alarcón. In May of 1607 he applied for passage to Mexico, <sup>40</sup>with a servant. In May of 1608 he undertook the voyage and remained in his native land until a mediados de 1613, trying to obtain there some position worthy of his talent. Also he continued his studies at the University of Mexico. Es de creer que a la corte no llegara hasta 1614.<sup>41</sup> His return to Spain saw him somewhat disillusioned, but still hoping for royal recognition. No le queda nada que hacer en la Nueva España.....Finca sus esperanzas en un

40. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 70.

41. Henríquez Ureña, op. cit., p. 189.



viaje a la corte.

This trip, then, might well account for the servant Hernando's allusion to aqueste globo inferior and:

Seis años de caminar  
De un lugar a otro lugar,  
Hecho caballero andante. I, 1

García further indicates that though now considered a forastero, he has definitely decided that his place is in Madrid.

García:

Es la corte del rey de España,  
Que es decillo de una vez. I, 1

The four elements under consideration: theme, plot construction, character study and dialogue, serve to deny rather than to affirm evidences of Plautine influence upon Alarcón. Despite the fact that Alarcón was acquainted with the works of Plautus, as have been the majority of dramatists throughout the centuries, the two lack a meeting ground of mutual interest. The comic indecorum of such characters as Lysidamus of the Casina, Demaentus of the Asinaria, Euclio of the Aulularia, Demipho of the Mercator, to mention but a few, does not point the way for an Alarconian comedia based upon greatness of soul, nobility of heart and virtue as its own reward.

Not only was Alarcón not interested in arousing laughter, he was striving to uphold both moral stamina and his own courage. He was undertaking the task of proving himself not only a dramatist but a Spaniard; he sought to

establish in answer to his critics the belief that in spite of his physical handicaps he was worthy of recognition and respect.. This he must accomplish through his comedia by means of characters such as don Juan of Las paredes oyen, the marqués of El examen de maridos, Rodrigo of Los pechos privilegiados.

There is no basis of encouragement for such ambition in Plautus. There is, indeed, an unbridgeable distance between the gay burlesque of the Latin poet and the staid dignity of Alarcón. When the latter makes use of the comic element, which is comparatively seldom, he as a rule introduces it through the gracioso or criado and his love affair with the criada. This character with its varied traits, moulded from the clay of the Spanish people, brought their lives to the stage, just as Sancho Panza brought to Don Quijote the salty wit of realism.

There were definite ideas in Spain as to the construction of the seventeenth century comedia.<sup>43</sup> Alarcón must consider these ideas, he must meet certain requirements. The pundonor, the position of women, a militant patriotism, the spirit of chivalry plus that of the pícaro,<sup>44</sup> none of these could be overlooked. The dramatist might minimize and restrain; this Alarcón did in some instances, shifting his emphasis to character study. Beyond this he could not and did not go. Against such a background, his characters,

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43. Chaylor, H. J., Dramatic Theory in Spain, Cambridge, 1925, p. xi.

44. Loc.cit.

dialogue and structure are blended together to bring out in strong relief his ideas of morality. In none of these do we see reflected the careless gaiety nor the amused and easy nonchalance of Plautus.

## CHAPTER II

TERENCE AND ALARCÓN  
COMEDIAS DE CARÁCTER

The basic difference between the plays of Plautus and of Terence lies in their interpretation of comedy. Whereas Plautus wrote for the people and for the sake of amusement, Terence pictures a new and more serious type of play. As a member of an aristocratic literary circle, he wrote first for his friends, taking advantage of their encouragement and suggestions. He then presented his conception of comedy to a public which he had professed to scorn.

It is evident, however, that he was eager for approval of his new style. "Give me a chance to grow. I give you a chance to see new and faultless plays."<sup>1</sup> He sought not only grace and ease of diction, but symmetry of plot as well. The sharp contrasts and effects of Plautus gave way in Terence to smoothness and elegance, farce became high comedy, buffoonery quieted to more modest wit. The goal which Terence set for himself was comedy of manners.

To achieve a polished comedy he sacrificed somewhat in "vigor, spontaneity and power to express passion and depth of feeling."<sup>2</sup> Working with a theme similar to that

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1. Norwood, Gilbert, Plautus and Terence, New York, 1932, p. 107.
  2. Ashmore, Sidney G., The Comedies of Terence, New York, 1908, p. 35. Duff, J. Wight, A Literary History of Rome, London and Leipsic, 1909, p. 213.

used by Plautus, Terence chose situations and characters much more acceptable to a universal audience. His reproductions of Greek dramatic literature show a mastery of technical development not attained by Plautus. Terence visioned a comedy which would be didactic in that it would show the excellence of its own technique.

This technique is based upon a method best described as one of "duality"<sup>3</sup> and consists of a skillful balance between plot and characters. A secondary interest or character is introduced solely to help in solving the first difficulty. In itself, this incident is of no importance, and must not be enlarged to a counterplot. Simplicity is the keynote, with emphasis on interdependence of actions and characters.

Terence did not achieve perfection in his technique until he wrote the Adelphoe and Phormio. These two plays show to best advantage his adroitness in blending comic incidents with character study. The two brothers of the Adelphoe are made to illustrate the failure of the two systems of upbringing so hotly contested between Demea and Micio; meanwhile the two old men are working out the solution of their difficulties. Compromise is the answer to the problems set by Terence, a mutual adjustment that will in turn both motivate and solve the comedy.

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3. Norwood, op. cit., p. 147.

Phormio is in theme much closer to Plautus and the stock subjects of the Greek and Latin plays. Antipho must marry his cousin, in spite of a secret bride. Phaedria wishes to purchase his mistress but has no money, hence the adventurer Phormio steps in. With great cleverness he plays one against the other to obtain the desired results. Antipho's bride proves to be Chremes' daughter by another marriage; now Chremes must not only furnish money to his son Phaedria, but also profuse explanations to Phaedria's mother. In this way the two difficulties emerge as one, the spotlight of comedy is now centered upon Chremes and it is he who must seek a compromise. Here as in the Adelphoe Terence has attained mastery of his method, a simplicity and balance which realize perfection.

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The Hecyra, the Heautontimorumenos, the Andria and the Eunuchus all show an attempt at this technique, but with less success. Subject matter in these four comedies drops now and then to the level of Plautus. Terence even found it necessary to defend some of his characters of the Eunuchus and to state in the Prologue that "nothing is said that has not been said before." The introduction of the scene in which Phaedria's brother dresses as the eunuch in order to seduce the slave girl bears a strong resemblance to Plautine comedy.

Pamphilus, of the Hecyra, has wronged Philumena before their marriage and now refuses to make her his wife.

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4. To be discussed in detail in a later chapter, together with La verdad sospechosa.

His troubles are blamed on the mother-in-law, but it is the courtesan Bacchis, favorite of Pamphilus, who finally discovers the real identity of Philumena and brings about the adjustment. The father of the Heautontimorumenos torments himself with regrets for the harsh treatment that has driven away his son Clinia. Clinia has refused to give up his affair with Antiphila, and is now aided by Clitipho and the latter's mistress Bacchis. Antiphila of course turns out to be a sister of Clitipho and so may marry Clinia. Clitipho has procured from his father the money to purchase Bacchis, but promises now to appease him by taking a wife. Thus the courtesan once more points the way to a solution, but as a concession to the higher ideals of Terence, steps aside once her mission is fulfilled.

Much stress is laid upon the moral purpose of Terence. Again it is important to note that this purpose was, to a large extent, to raise the standards of the theater by producing comedy worthy of its name.<sup>5</sup> He did not, in

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5. In the words of Terence: "The answer must be that competition for the prize is open to all followers of dramatic art." Phormio, Prologue. II, p. 7.

"Do not allow any doing of yours to let dramatic art fall into the hands of the few." Hecyra, Prologue. II, p. 131.

"--that you may see for certain what your hopes are for the future, whether his coming plays are to be worth your attendance or damned without a hearing." Andrian, Prologue. I, p. 7.

most instances, set out to prove or disprove a thesis. To quote Mr. Norwood: "Terence's plays are not the vehicle of his moral idea, but they are the idea, expressed by dialogue, action and the shape of his work..... This governing idea is the mutual dependence of human beings....and true life is found, not by the excogitation of ethical standards but by human sympathy."<sup>6</sup>

But it is a far cry from the fundamental simplicity of this point of view to the Stoic maxims of Alarcón.<sup>7</sup> The comedia de carácter of the latter gives every indication of being a conveyance for the writer's moral ideas, his characters seem drawn for the purpose of illustrating that vices are wrong and virtues right. Alarcón's moral code in many respects cannot escape the label of personal. True, the vices and the virtues to which it pertains are universal. But they are portrayed most effectively as they reflect the life and happiness of Alarcón himself.

Las paredes oyen depicts the superiority of beauty of soul over that of face and figure. In don Juan, Alarcón has issued his own defense, he has set forth ya que no la historia de su vida la historia de su corazón.<sup>8</sup> The ugly Juan is able to triumph over his more personable rival because

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6. Norwood, op. cit., pp. 179-80. Sellar, W. Y., Roman Poets of the Republic, Oxford, 1881, p. 210.

7. Seneca, Libro de oro (o sea, Sus aforismos morales), translated by Jaun Álvarez, 1515, Biblioteca de autores españoles, vol. 65, p. 72.

8. Teja Zabre, Alfonso, Fernández-Guerra y Orbe. Extracto con nuevos documentos y datos, Mexico, 1939, p. 64.



the latter stoops to trickery and las paredes oyen. Doña Ana learns of the handsome Mendo's hypocrisy and finally turns to the ugly one who personifies faithfulness and strength of character. It is this same greatness of spirit with its unequal struggle against heavy odds that forms the background for the life of Alarcón, as well as for many of his plays. He says of the Juan who so closely resembles himself:

Su hermosura es la nobleza,  
Su gentileza el saber. II, 4

Porque las gracias del alma  
Son alma de las del cuerpo. II, 2

E. Abreu Gómez speaks of Alarcon's resentimientos criollos which increased with the treatment accorded him in Spain. Hízose un tipo excéntrico y un espíritu de armargura, de desconfianza y quizás de rencor.<sup>9</sup> As Mr. Anibal has suggested, "It must be remembered that he was a Creole, and that in Spain the New World was judged to be quite devoid of all intellectual culture and literary life. Although mutual hatred of Creoles and Spaniards in colonies did not exist in the mother country, malicious resentment of literary pretensions in so monstrous an indiano can readily be appreciated."<sup>10</sup> This resentment crystallized and brought forth don Mendo, synthesis of evil mind and handsome

9. E. Abreu Gómez, Ruiz de Alarcon, Bibliografía crítica, Mexico, 1939, p. 40.

10. Anibal, C. E., Juan Ruiz de Alarcon, Hispania, XIII, 1930, p. 283.

body. Góngora, Quevedo, Suárez de Figueroa and the Conde<sup>11</sup> de Villamediana are among those thought to be portrayed in this murmurador. Slander was the thing that Alarcón most hated, he took occasion while pointing out its viciousness to slap at the enemies who indulged in it as his expense.

Vicios hay de mil modos  
Que no aborrece la gente,  
Y solo del maldiciente  
Huyen con cuidado todos. Las paredes oyen,  
III, 5.

El examen de maridos was suggested primarily by the refrán Antes que te cases, mira lo que haces, hence Inés' resultant determination to test her suitors. But the comedia has a secondary intrigue which almost overshadows the first, the slandering of the marqués by his enemies. The gossip is disproved by the conde, rival for the hand of Inés, as a gesture of true friendship and as a further protest against ridicule of the author. In the marqués, as in don Juan of Las paredes oyen, Alarcón has embodied his own longing for perfection and his hatred of malice.

Marqués:

Hay tal maldad! Cosas son  
Que trazan envidias fieras. III, 12

Cielos, ¿Qué injurias son estas,  
Que en mí ejecutan sus iras?  
Qué traiciones, qué mentiras,  
Con tal ingenio compuestas,  
Que es imposible dellas  
Darla desengaño intente? III, 12

Inés presents here one of Alarcón's frequent and favorite

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11. Jiménez Rueda, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y su tiempo, Mexico, 1939, p. 171.

comparisons:

Si iguales  
 Los meritos corporales  
 A los del alma juzgáis,  
 Erraislo;  
 Que con el alma se trata  
 Si con el cuerpo se habita. III, 5

Los favores del mundo, as has been generally acknowledged, takes advantage of the opportunity to present the nobility of Alarcon's family. Thus Alarcón introduces his protagonist:

Garci-Ruiz de Alarcón  
 Es mi nombre.  
 --Que mis pasados heredan  
 Del Zaballos, que a Castilla  
 Abrió de Alarcón las puertas.  
 --Que heredar honra es ventura  
 Y valor es merecella. I, 1

In line with his usual characterization of this name Alarcón personifies in don Juan the virtues of loyalty, bravery and honor, giving him this time his own family name. Friendship again forms a main current of action and Juan repays García for having spared his life. Gratitude is his chief virtue, and through it García wins out over the love and jealousy of the prince.

Alarcón continues to show in Mudarse por mejorarse his personal dislike of gossip and his sensitiveness in regard to physical shortcomings.

Mas procuren de mil modos  
 Los malsines murmurar. II, 13  
 --que siempre la confianza  
 Es mayor que la hermosura. I, 5

Here too is one of many references to Alarcón's much tried patience in dealing with his political pretensions and the

attitude of the king's ministers:

Que no hay del Ganges al Istro  
 Sirvientes de mi cuidado.  
 Más secreto y recatado  
 Seré que un recién ministro.  
 --Pues ¿hay parca inexorable  
 Más cruel, más intratable,  
 Que un ministro el primer año?      II, 7

One scene in particular in this comedia indicates the author's legal mind, an attribute quite frequently overlooked in ascribing to Alarcón the "clearness and conciseness of Terence." This scene, the first interview between García and Leonor, develops in the manner of direct questions and direct answers. It centralizes action and character, it tells us in few words that García's fickleness has met its match, that Leonor will pay him in his own coin for his game of mudarse por mejorarse. No es la primera, ni la única vez que nuestro Poeta deja traslucir en sus diálogos algún resabio de su profesión, ya en la argumentación,  
 12  
ya en el lenguaje.

Attesting Alarcón's treatment of vices and virtues, the sin of ingratitude is heavily underscored in La prueba de las promesas. The story is one from don Juan Manuel's  
 13  
Conde Lucanor:

Al que mucho ayudares et non telo conosciere,  
 Menos ayuda avras, desque en grand onnra subiere.

This was the advice given by Conde Lucanor and it is this

12. Núñez de Arenas, Isaac, Comedias escogidas de Juan Ruíz de Alarcón, Edición de la Real Academia, Madrid, 1867, p. 162.
13. Biblioteca de autores españoles, XX, p. 547.

same moral that gives Alarcón the basis for his play.

The unworthiness of the don Juan of this comedia is exceptional, as Alarcón in most of his plays made his own name the synonym for nobility and honor. Los galanes que en las comedias de Alarcón llevan el nombre de Juan, forman un  
 14  
grupo atractivo. Juan learns his lesson well, however, thus giving the author an opportunity to draw a character strong enough to accept discipline.

Gossip is once more rebuked:

Tristán:

Algún testimonio fué  
 De cualquier lengua envidiosa. II, (no scenes)  
 --Aquel es murmurador  
 Que divulga falsedades. III, (no scenes)

Alarcón has been sharply criticized for assuming the title of don. His answer to such criticism shows plainly how much of himself the dramatist put into his characters.

Pero si sangre heredé  
 Congue presuma y blasone,  
 ¿Quién quitara que me endone  
 Cuando la gana me dé?

--Es accidente del nombre,  
 Que la nobleza del hombre  
 Que le tiene nos publica.  
 --Luego si es noble, es bien hecho  
 Ponerse don siempre un hombre,  
 Pues es el don en el nombre  
 Lo que hábito en el pecho. II

No hay mal que por bien no venga gives don Juan occasion to show that loyalty to one's king can atone for a great many sins. Juan has wasted his heritage and, about to steal, discovers a conspiracy against the king. In proving

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14. Quirarte, Clotilde, Personajes de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Mexico, 1939, p. 32.

his unselfish allegiance he restores his own honor and good name. This loyalty, an essential element of Spanish pundonor, motivates both character and plot. Even don Domingo, at first indifferent to all but comfort, becomes a true caballero when called upon to betray his king.

No hay muerte que me espante  
 En advirtiéndome que manchar intenta  
 El cristal puro de mi honor la afrenta. III, 2  
 --Muriendo ha de sustentar  
 La voz de Alfonso mi boca. III, 10

In the king, Alfonso III of Leon are blended the characteristics of nobility and bravery, together with the fierceness of the pundonor, that Alarcón insists upon in his portrayal of the father. He voices the same cry that we hear from the lips of don Beltrán of La verdad sospechosa:

¡El mismo que yo engendré  
 Es mi mayor enemigo!  
 Matarlo será el castigo  
 Si culpa engendrarlo fué. III, 8

Character study with Alarcón takes on a different aspect from that of Terence. The essential difference springs from the variance in moral code of the two authors and their methods of adapting it to their work. As has been pointed out, Terence's moral was a simple one of human sympathy and interdependence. His comedies sought elegance and symmetry of form, they showed interest in dramatic balance and higher ideals for the theater. The aim of Terence seems to have been the creation of a deft and well-timed comedy, having a universal flavor and standing at a level higher than that of Plautus.

Alarcón, on the other hand, wrote his comedias de carácter with a preponderantly defensive purpose in mind. His main thesis was the superiority of beauty of soul over that of body; this he demonstrates particularly in Las paredes oyen, El examen de maridos, Los favores del mundo. To his basic moral idea he adds characterizations of slander ingratitude and deceit, which he punishes severely, while extolling friendship loyalty and honor.

His characters show themselves to be far more than types. They are the personification of Alarcón's likes and dislikes, and also the expression of his secret longings and resentments. Don Mendo of Las paredes oyen is the image of many who had humiliated Alarcón; the dramatist himself steps in as don Juan to show that it is not ugliness that should be punished but hypocrisy and spite. The Garci-Ruiz de Alarcón of Los favores del mundo wins his battle against riches and jealousy because of his loyalty and honor. In El examen de maridos we find the same defensive characterization of the marqués and its attendant answer to slander. Don Juan of La prueba de las promesas calls attention to himself because of the unusualness of a vice such as ingratitude in a character named Juan. García of Mudarse por mejorarse is an example of one who is eager to benefit himself at the expense of others. Fickleness is frequently depicted and criticized by Alarcón, also the throwing away of one's good name as in No hay mal que por bien no venga.

Terence quietly incorporated in his new type of comedy his ideas of "help one another" and his universal characterizations. Alarcón set up first his moral code, each vice and each virtue to be portrayed by a character, and around this he built his comedia. For structural background he chose the comedia of the seventeenth century, with its powerful motive of pundonor. In subject matter quite often he followed his contemporaries in working out the popular refrán. The collecting of these refranes was particularly emphasized at the University of Salamanca<sup>15</sup> and their influence was widespread. Lope de Vega and Cervantes put them to excellent use and their popularity continued throughout the siglo de oro.<sup>16</sup>

The pundonor shows itself clearly both as an incentive for action and a foundation for character study. Without this element, Alarcón would have no solution for No hay mal que por bien no venga, no saving grace for either don Juan or don Domingo. Los favores del mundo rests entirely upon a question of personal honor, La verdad sospechosa presents a father who can forgive all but a blot on the family pride. Doña Clara assumes care of the family tradition and dignity in Mudarse por mejorarse, the jealousy of the marqués bringing to this play a secondary intrigue such as quite frequently destroyed Alarcón's attempted unity of action. El examen de maridos and Las

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15. Hayes, F. C., The Collecting of Proverbs in Spain before 1650, *Hispania*, XX, 1937, p. 93.

16. Ibid., p. 94.



paredes oyen would be but empty shells unless the question of personal integrity and respect was woven through the action. Ganar amigos and Los pechos privilegiados, to be analyzed later, are the type of play that shows most clearly Alarcón's steps in this direction.

As a source of ideas for Alarcón, the early Spanish drama should not be overlooked. Here was a field rich in classic tradition, yet steeped in an atmosphere of an ever increasing nationalistic individualism. Torres Naharro, called Spain's first real dramatist,<sup>17</sup> used in some of his comedias a classical setting. Furnishing his own dialogue and characters, however, he developed that conflict between love and honor which was to rule Spanish drama for so many centuries. "Family honor made its first appearance on any stage in Himenea."<sup>18</sup> The plot of Comedia Himenea is taken from parts of the celebrated Celestina of the fifteenth century. We find in Naharro's play many elements used by seventeenth century Spanish dramatists, including Juan Ruíz de Alarcón. In addition to the pundonor, there is the jealous brother who assumes the right to avenge any reflection upon family name. There are secret meetings discovered by the brother, with the sister's life as a penalty, and forgiveness granted only on condition of the lover's marriage. The servants of Himenea present a love scene which reproduces the principal one "in a lower key."<sup>19</sup> This same contra

17. Crawford, J. P. W., Spanish Drama before Lope de Vega, Philadelphia, 1937, p. 96.

18. Loc. cit.

19. Crawford, op. cit., p. 91.

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figura, reflecting the actions of master and mistress became an indispensable component of the Spanish comedia.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that in the Latin theater, as in that of Alarcón, the servant played a most important role. Comparisons have been made between the Latin slave and the criado of the Spanish dramatist.<sup>21</sup> It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider the evolution of the Spanish criado and the equally important gracioso.

The servant underwent a decided change as he passed from the Latin comedy across the Spanish stage. He started out as a slave, trying desperately to please both the old and the young master, in order to escape punishment. He was a confidant of his young master, true, and thought up enough tricks to help him and to keep the comedy moving. But he was usually contemptuous of the master and of prime importance to him was his own hide. Whippings and chains were every-day fare and he must ever be on the alert to escape them.

Torres Naharro presented for the first time the Spanish gracioso, later to be such a prominent character with Lope de Vega and other seventeenth century writers. This was a type entirely different from either the usual comic character of early Spanish drama or the slave of Plautus or Terence.

In the early Spanish drama, the majority of comic

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20. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 219.

21. Pérez, op. cit., p. 23.

characters were stupid.<sup>22</sup> To this group belonged the bobo, the simple, the pastor and the rufián. Their appearance was limited to brief comic scenes, and their connection with the plot was vague. The bobo and the simple were less stupid than the other two and occasionally contained qualities of both extremes of stupidity and cleverness. Their resemblance to the Latin slave ended with flippancy and a great fondness for food.

"Most attractive of all the comic characters is the confidential servant, practically all of whose traits are distinguished in Torres Naharro."<sup>23</sup> This type was first portrayed in Sempronio and Parmeno of the Celestina, and is exemplified in Lenicio of Torres Naharro's Comedia Serafina. "Lenicio adds to the role of slave bequeathed by Terence, the class consciousness vaguely felt by some dramatists in the sixteenth century and of which Naharro serves as a mouthpiece.....He replies with uncommon frank-<sup>24</sup>ness which would not be tolerated in any ancient comedy."

It is this same frankness, shown in the gracioso of Torres Naharro, that builds itself into a most remarkable characteristic with the confidential servant of Alarcón. The dramatist has in addition drawn upon other features pertaining to the early Spanish criado. Parody of the master's love affair has been referred to, such a parody

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22. Hendrix, W. S., Some Native Comic Types in Early Spanish Drama, Ohio State Bulletin, I, 1924, p. 4.

23. Ibid., p. 6.

24. Crawford, op. cit., p. 93.

resulting usually in the marriage of gracioso and graciosa. Loyalty to one's master (occasionally replaced by disloyalty), advice and encouragement for master or mistress, contributions to the plot as well as satirical asides and the presence of the servant at the end of the comedia,<sup>25</sup> were ingredients used by early Spanish writers.

The criado de confianza, a mingling of elements both Latin and Spanish, emerges thus a predominantly Spanish character. To him is added the spirit of the pícaro, that Spanish rogue so popular in Lazarillo de Tormes.<sup>26</sup> As he steps through the pages of the comedia he grows in dignity and in value, and with Juan Ruíz de Alarcón he comes into his own. Self esteem takes the place of the early frankness, dignity and loyalty are stressed. The criado or gracioso shows great devotion for his master, and yet in him the legacy of the pícaro is not to be denied.

Small wonder, then, that Alarcón describes as he does in Ganar amigos his feelings toward the character of the servant:

¿Tienen almas diferentes  
 En especie nuestros amos?  
 Muchos criados, ¿no han sido  
 Tan nobles como sus dueños?  
 --Por esto me canso el ver  
 En la comedia afrentados  
 Siempre a los pobres criados  
 Siempre huír, siempre temer.     III, 8

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Julio Jiménez Rueda notes that the actual structure of the plays of Alarcón differs but slightly

25. Hendrix, op. cit., pp. 52-67.

26. Crawford, op. cit., p. 96.

27. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 159.

from that of his contemporaries. Very little is known, however, of the mechanical structure of Alarcón's comedias. This is also true of plays of the other dramatists who were, to a certain extent, his models. There are some excellent studies available on the subject of versification; one concerning Lope de Vega, done by Morley and Bruerton, and previous ones on Tirso, Moreto and Alarcón, done by Morley. These studies show the characteristics and preferences as to form of the dramatists, but no definite conclusions can as yet be drawn. The much quoted Arte nuevo de hacer comedias can scarcely be taken as an authority on the uses of meter, since even Lope did not follow his rules outlined therein. "Lope's description of the uses of the various meters seems in general more a creation on the spur of the moment for the purposes of the poem than a carefully considered account of his usual practice."<sup>28</sup>

Mr. Morley speaks of the extraordinary variety of meters employed in the comedia and expresses his belief that the technical methods of the seventeenth century dramatists have not been adequately studied. Until such time as they are, no evaluation of actual structure in regard to Alarcón can be made. A study of this nature does not seem to Mr. Morley to promise very much in the way of definite results. "And I do not know that much would be revealed after all. It is quite likely that the Lopean comedia impressed itself outright upon the era, with slight

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28. Morley and Bruerton, Chronology of Lope de Vega's Comedias, New York, 1940, p. 53.

variation."<sup>29</sup>

The movement of the characters of Alarcón's comedias follows the rhythm of a quadrille, a rhythm which Señor Jiménez Rueda finds to be typical of the Spanish theater. Ladies and gentlemen who begin as partners, whirl through the comedia to the arms of someone new. Loving one person in the first act, the third act finds them marrying another. Most valuable to Alarcón is his skill in effecting just such a change in affections, and a perfect example is Las paredes oyen. Doña Ana, scarcely able to countenance the sight of Juan's ugliness, becomes gradually and deeply convinced of his worthiness. At the same time, Mendo is demonstrating just as thoroughly his own baseness. A similar transition occurs frequently in Alarcón's plays, with varying circumstances and characters, and is smoothly and deftly ordered.

Mudarse por mejorarse is a clever picture of the way in which Leonor repays García for his easy transfer of sentiment. El examen de maridos offers the same solution as does Las paredes oyen. Inés turns to the one who has been victimized, her love for him swiftly replacing her former dislike. Blanca of La prueba de las promesas gives her hand to Enrique as the result of Juan's proven ingratitude. Don Juan of No hay mal que por bien no venga wins back by means of loyalty to his king the love of Leonor

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29. Morley, S. G., Objective Criteria for Judging Authorship and Chronology in the Comedia, Hispanic Review, 1937, V, p. 285.

which he had lost. García of La verdad sospechosa has lied merrily to obtain the love of Jacinta, whom he thinks to be Leonor, now he must accept the hand of Leonor. His punishment centers in this very change of affections with which Alarcón in so many instances rewards his galanes.

The three unities, often considered inseparable from classical comedy and many times called a part of Alarcón's plays, do not bear out their promised influence.. To unity of place Alarcón makes no concession beyond the one made by Lope de Vega and many other Spanish dramatists. At the beginning of his comedia he states: La escena es en Madrid (or Sevilla, or Zamora), but individual scenes choose their own location.

To unity of time Alarcón pays scant attention. El examen de maridos and Mudarse por mejorarse are the only two comedias de carácter that do not extend their time beyond the twenty-four hours of the Classics. Notice in No hay mal que por bien no venga, for instance, that sufficient time elapses during the play for:

Beltrán:

Las noches que hemos desvelado  
Buscando a don Domingo inútilmente. III, 1

More time passes between Juan's interrupted duel with don Domingo, the finding of the latter a prisoner in the house of don Ramiro and the final arrival of the king to reward don Juan. In Las paredes oyen Celia tells don Juan that Ana is preparing to leave the next day for the novena at Alcalá. We also learn that the noche de San Juan is six

days away, that doña Ana intends to return secretly to Madrid for this occasion, then slip back to her novena. Part of the action ensues, consequently, in Alcalá..

Conde:           y ¿que viste  
                  Cuando doña Ana venía  
                  De Alcalá, tu desengaño?           III, 12

La prueba de las promesas, based upon the magic of don Illán, has its action telescoped by this device, toward which Alarcón shows a decided leaning. In this play he states frankly that he has taken the story from the <sup>30</sup> Conde Lucanor, and he follows don Juan Manuel's development of action. The play must of necessity work out, over a period of time, the imaginings of don Juan. In these he sees himself transferred to Madrid and elevated to the title of marqués de Tarifa, whereupon he forgets his benefactor Illán and turns his back upon the love of Blanca. Illán tells us that all this takes place within an hour, but this is in accordance with the tale of don Juan Manuel.

Los favores del mundo starts its action one day, continues it that night and the following day. Julia then sends Anarda away so that she may be free to carry out her trickery with García. It is midnight again when Anarda returns, Julia's falseness is discovered and the prince rewards García with the hand of Anarda.. In La verdad sospechosa Tristán tells us:

                  ;Y ayer llegó a la Corte!       I, 5

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30. Biblioteca de autores españoles, XX, p. 449.



The duel with don Juan takes place the following night, as does García's interview with Lucrecia. The third act finds García asking:

¿No os hablé en vuestro balcón,  
Lucrecia, tres noches ha?                      III, 6

Unity of action is rarely achieved by Alarcón.

Of his seven comedias de carácter, only two maintain a single, clear-cut direction. These are La verdad sospechosa and Las paredes oyen. Alarcón keeps his action well in hand here, he sees to it that secondary incidents do not disturb the main thought nor become overemphasized, thus detracting from his character study.

El examen de maridos falls into just such an error with the introduction of Blanca's jealousy and her slander of the marqués. The action then swings to a personal defense of the marqués, leaving behind the original purpose and method of doña Ines' school for husbands. Mudarse por mejorarse places upon doña Clara the burden of family dignity. She must forbid the marqués her house because of an imagined affront to Leonor's virtue, thus creating a second plot which all but eclipses the first. Add to this the episode of the silla de manos and we see how far from unity the play has wandered.

In Los favores del mundo and No hay mal que por bien no venga Alarcón shows clearly his tendency toward intrigue and complicity of action. Both weave a counterplot of scheming. No hay mal que por bien no venga is solved by loyalty to the king, Los favores del mundo by the generosity

of the prince. These are the secondary actions which Alarcón either cannot or will not exclude from his comedias. Outside the group of character studies, they take command of his writings and assume the importance accorded them by Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and others. They are a part of the comedia of the seventeenth century, and it is clearly on them that Alarcón builds his drama, not on the rules of the Classical school.

Discussing the way in which the Classic writers regarded the unities, Mr. Flickinger<sup>31</sup> remarks that the events of a Greek drama were conventionally treated as occupying no more than twenty-four hours. The poets presented them as if they occurred within a day, and they were accepted thus by the public. If any crowding of action was necessary, the poet did not bother to explain. The general principle of Greek dramatists seemed to be to leave length of action to the imagination unless it became necessary to determine the amount of time involved.

Mr. Flickinger further states that "though Aristotle commended unity of time rather as a generalization, actually the restriction was further reduced, in most cases, to the hours of daylight."<sup>32</sup> Terence in his translation of Menander's Heautontimorumenos strangely enough allows a night to elapse and calls attention to the fact. This does

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31. Flickinger, Roy C., The Greek Theater and Its Drama, Chicago, 1922, pp. 254-6.

32. Ibid., p. 253.

not exceed the twenty-four hours, however, and according to Mr. Flickinger constitutes about the maximum time allowed by ancient drama. Terence does not extend the action of his other comedies beyond a few hours.

Conforming to the unity of place, the Eunuchus, Phormio and the Adelphoe lay their scene in Athens at "a place where four streets meet." The Hecyra and the Andrian also show a street, on either side of which are the homes of the principal characters. The same is true of the Heautontimorumenos except that a country road is substituted. In the Andrian we are told that the scene is unchanged throughout; in the remaining plays the characters merely enter or leave the nearby houses as the action demands.

In John Sargeaunt's translation of Terence's plays, the statement is made in the Eunuchus that ten minutes have elapsed between the first and second acts, a few minutes between the second and third, nearly an hour before the fourth, and a quarter of an hour prior to Act Five.<sup>33</sup> Similar statements may be observed in the Andrian,<sup>34</sup> Phormio,<sup>35</sup> the Hecyra<sup>36</sup> and the Adelphoe.<sup>37</sup> Act II of the Adelphoe also informs us that Aeschinus' rescue of his brother's mistress from the slave-dealer had occurred the night previous to the opening of the play.

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33. Terence, Loeb Classical Library, New York, 1920, I, pp. 253, 275, 285, 321.  
 34. Ibid., pp. 33, 89.  
 35. Ibid., II, pp. 37, 67.  
 36. Ibid., pp. 143, 151, 175, 195.  
 37. Ibid., pp. 231, 247, 271, 293.

Simplicity of character must of necessity be observed by Classic writers, limited as they were to a single day. Even though this day might not be rigidly adhered to, no great change in character could take place during such short action. This would account partly for the fact that Terence drew types rather than individuals and that they were of secondary importance to him. Their proper position in the balancing of his comedy appears to have interested him primarily. "Terence seems consciously to have striven for a suspended dénouement."<sup>38</sup>

The two fathers of the Adelphoe are believed by some critics to present character study, and certainly they come closer to this purpose than do other characters of Terence, but even so they are not afforded time for development. Demea changes his ways, apparently to conform to those of Micio and to win back his son's affections. But actually he indulges in a form of trickery at Micio's expense. When he decides to be liberal instead of caustic, it is the possessions of Micio that he gives away, and even Micio himself in an unwelcome marriage. He sees that the other's generosity has been responsible for his popularity and wishes to even the score. He states his purpose frankly:

I cut his throat with his own sword. II, Line 958  
Furthermore his final advice to his sons shows that he has not altered radically either his opinions or his tendencies.

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38. Frank, Tenney, Life and Literature in the Roman Republic, Berkeley, 1930, p. 115.

Now if the reason why my life is odious to you,  
 Aeschinus, and to your brother if that I do not  
 at once wholly fall in with your desires, right  
 or wrong, I wash my hands of it.  
 ...But if you choose rather....to have one reprove  
 and correct you...here am I to do it for you

II, p. 323, Lines 988-93

Terence draws no conclusions. He presents Demea  
 and Micio as they are and lets the reader take his choice  
 and make his own compromise. The two sons, certainly,  
 illustrate no advantage in either the method of discipline  
 nor that of laxness. They have been described by various  
 critics as "young roués,"<sup>39</sup> "bumptious, insolent, self indulgent  
 and bullying."<sup>40</sup> Mr. Sellar emphasizes the fact that in  
 limiting his ambition to the production of a faithful copy  
 of his original, Terence shows the absence of all moral  
 fibre in presenting character and philosophy of life. "The  
 idea of human nature in its weakness and in its sympathy  
 with weakness may be said to be the new element contributed  
 to Roman life by the comedy of Terence."<sup>41</sup>

It is most obvious that Alarcón did not follow  
 Terence in this sympathy for human weakness. Alarcón's  
 moral fibre was stern, doubly so because it must be defensive  
 to meet the needs of his unfortunate personality. To those  
 who criticized and laughed at him, his answer was that  
 strength of character was far more to be valued than physical  
 appearance. He knew what it meant to face hostility and

39. Tenney, op. cit., p. 79.

40. Norwood, op. cit., p. 172.

41. Sellar, op. cit., pp. 210-15.

derision, a well trained intellect his only asset, and to fight for recognition of his integrity. This struggle has stamped its indelible impression upon his comedias, particularly upon the comedias de carácter. It is made manifest in Alarcón's characters and the manner in which they develop, it is proclaimed by their words and actions. Pictures from the life and times of Alarcón are to be found in his comedias, not images from Terence's highly polished reproductions of Menander.

## CHAPTER III

LA VERDAD SOSPECHOSA  
THE ANDRIAN, THE ADELPHOE

La verdad sospechosa, considered by many to be Alarcón's best comedia de carácter, attracts additional attention because of Pierre Corneille's French version Le Menteur. Corneille praised highly the Spanish play, calling it the marvel of the theater and stating that he found nothing comparable among ancients or moderns.<sup>1</sup> Alarcón has indeed scored a triumph with his characterization of don García who lies for the fun of it and talks himself out of the girl he loves.

Miss Elisa Pérez<sup>2</sup> finds great similarity between La verdad sospechosa and the Andrian of Terence. Likeness of the two plays rests chiefly, in her opinion, on structure, types and ideas. As structure she sets forth the plan whereby the Latin father prepares a marriage for his son, the son wishing to marry elsewhere. Deception is carried out by the slave, the real identity of the girl is discovered and the conventional marriage takes place.

Such is the plan of the Andrian. Glycerium, supposedly the sister of a courtesan, has been seduced by

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1. Corneille, Pierre, Ouevres, Paris, 1862, IV, pp. 133, 134.
  2. Pérez, Elisa, Introducción a un estudio comparado del teatro de Alarcón y el de Plauto y Terencio, (In Edit), pp. 6, 7.

Pamphilus. He promises to marry her, but his father has arranged a marriage for him with a daughter of Chremes. Simo, the father, decides to continue the wedding plans in order to ascertain his son's real feelings, but Chremes breaks them off. Davus, the slave, advises Pamphilus to raise no objection to the marriage, and plans to deceive Simo. Glycerium is discovered to be the daughter of Chremes and so is married to Pamphilus, and the double wedding is completed by Chreme's other daughter and Charinus.

Alarcón has not followed the same pattern, nor has he chosen the same type of characters. Simo, the Latin father, is weak and vacillating, while Alarcón's don Beltrán cannot forget that he is a caballero. The son Pamphilus does nothing but ask for aid, the Spanish García has presence of mind and wit. The Andrian has a slave girl in place of a heroine, Alarcón's Jacinta is independence personified. The Latin slave Davus is unscrupulous, the criado drawn by Alarcón is loyal and cooperative.

Don Beltrán does not arrange a marriage for García until he becomes convinced that it will serve to steady him and induce him to give up his lies. García meanwhile has been enjoying himself thoroughly, making love to Jacinta and spreading fabulous tales about himself. In so doing, however, he violates the code of the pundonor, the one offense that don Beltrán will not overlook. While Beltrán dislikes the thought of his son's falsehoods,



he feels that they can be controlled, until they suddenly become a reflection on the family honor. García's marriage to Lucrecia, then, takes place not only as a punishment for his lies, but as the inevitable result of this code of honor. For don Beltrán there is no other answer. García's word must be his bond, he has given it as a caballero, now he must be made to keep it. Beltrán has told García:

Decid, ¿qué será el hacerlo,  
Si vivo sin honra yo?  
--Que nacistes noble, al fin  
Y que soy padre vuestro.

Pues sin honor puede ganar  
Quien nació sin él, ¿no es cierto  
Que por el contrario puede,  
Quien con él nació, perdello?

II, 1

Thoroughly out of patience, he now says:

--yo quiero hablar  
A don Juan, y el cielo haga  
Que te dé a Lucrecia; que eres  
Tal, que ella es la engañada.

III, 9

And Lucrecia's father adds his convictions as dictated by the same pundonor:

Si vuestra inconstancia loca  
Os ha mudado tan presto,  
Yo lavaré mi deshonor  
Con sangre de vuestras venas.

III, 14

Much has been said by critics of the moral idea back of the father's action. Hence the dénouement of the play is credited with carrying out Alarcón's moral code, with the suggestion that Alarcón adopted the ideas of Terence, merely adding his thesis as an ending. But it is important to note that in this case the misconduct which provokes the punishment is mild and is not comparable

with the usual transgressions at which Alarcón directs his criticism. García is not vicious. His lies are not those of slander and malice, he harms no one but himself.

Without the chivalrous attributes of Beltrán, Alarcón would not have a play. The entire plot depends upon him and his reactions to the conduct of his son, not upon his chance willingness to let García choose a wife. García may go his merry way until he oversteps in the matter of family honor, then his affairs are no longer amusing. Don Beltrán listens with sympathy to García's account of his supposed difficulties and comes to his assistance, convinced of his love for Lucrecia. But when he finds that his son has lied to him, it is the family pride that has been tarnished. He will not yield an inch and García must himself pay for this dishonor. Don Beltrán is clearly the seventeenth century Spanish father, unrelenting and tyrannical.

Beltrán:

Vive Dios, si no recibes  
A Lucrecia por esposa,  
¡Que te he de quitar la vida!      III, 14

Compare with him Simo, the father of Pamphilus in the Andrian. He shows himself indulgent until he learns that he has been tricked, when he punishes the son's slave and orders Pamphilus to marry the girl selected for him. He relents, however, and lets himself be talked out of his decision on hearing that Pamphilus' mistress is Athenian born. This is to him the crucial interest.

Simo:

Indeed, I am extremely delighted that she turns out to be your daughter.

The event has reconciled me to everything.

p. 103. Lines 939, 948.

Between the weak and easy-going Pamphilus and don García there is no comparison. Pamphilus is a figure head, a stage presence and no more. He helplessly leaves his fate and his punishment to the slave, hoping only that he may continue to have his mistress. Don García is clever. True, it is his cleverness that gets him into trouble, but it also gives impetus to the plot. He yields gracefully to his father's commands, because to the seventeenth century galán there was no question of the father's autocracy.. A marriage was by no means the ultimate degree of punishment, the pundonor might easily demand death or exile.

Alarcón was not able to get away from this seventeenth century conception of the galán. In spite of his simplification, his down-to-earthness and his straightforward treatment of characters, the spirit and pride of the caballero still rode high. Always the pundonor became the commanding force and the family name came first. Because of this, García says to don Juan as they meet for a duel over Jacinta:

Libre fué el sacarme aquí  
Mas habiéndome sacado  
Me obligastes, y es forzado  
Puesto que tengo de hacer  
Como quien soy, no volver  
Sino muerto o vitorioso.

II, 11

The damas of Alarcón are individual with him. Nowhere else do we find a lady who has so much to say about her destiny but who at the same time is aloof, poised and indifferent. She is usually the incarnation of discretion and good breeding, with a definite mind of her own. She lacks the warmth and passion of Lope's women and the satirical aggressiveness of Tirso's. In the theater of Terence and Plautus she is but a shadow. She is either a courtesan or a slave girl, around the possession of whom the action centers, and who proves to be Athenian born in order to bring about the dénouement. Frequently she does not appear upon the stage, more often than not she is the young man's mistress, and frequently she is used as a means of livelihood by either her mother or a procurer. Certainly she offers to Alarcón no suggestion for his self-confident lady Jacinta, nor the quieter, more modest Lucrecia. Jacinta establishes her independence by such statements as:

Yerran vuestros pensamientos,  
Caballero, en presumir  
Que puedo yo recibir  
Más que los ofrecimientos. I, 5

--En una honrada mujer;  
Que el breve determinarse  
En cosas de tanto peso;  
O es tener muy poco seso  
O gran gana de casarse. I, 9

Lucrecia shows herself not too willing to accept the hand of García:

Y si es su amor verdadero  
Porque es digno mi amor. III, 1

--Que estoy por creerle, dije,  
No por quererle estoy. III, 6

The evolution of the criado de confianza, playing such an important role in the comedias of Alarcón, has been discussed. . Particularly characteristic of him are his dignity and self-assurance, mingled with the attributes of the much loved pícaro. Tristán, friend and confidant of his master, tries to help him, worrying meanwhile lest García be caught.

To García: Que cogernos  
En mentira será afrenta. I, 8

To don Beltrán:  
Pues lo peor falta agora  
Que son tales, que podrá  
Cogerle en ellas cualquiera. II, 5

Even in the message bearer, an unimportant figure, we see depicted the same dignified restraint. Camino, the escudero, expresses further the position accorded the servant in the plays of Alarcón.

To Lucrecia: Este me dió para tí  
Tristán, de quien don García  
Con justa causa confía  
Lo mismo que tú de mí;  
Que aunque su dicha es tan corta,  
Que sirve, es muy bien nacido.  
--No se perderá por mí  
Pues ves que Camino soy. III, 1

Contrast this servant with Byrria, servant to Charinus, in the Andrian.

Byrria: Of course, so that if he refuses he may  
take it you're on the way to be his wife's  
lover if he marries her.

Charinus: Damn you and your suspicion, you scoundrel!  
Lines 316, 17.

The element of deception enters the discussion as a moving force for both plays. It is not, however, the same type of deception nor is it used in the same manner. The action of the Andrian is based wholly on the deception of Simo by his son's slave. Beyond that, the plot does not develop. Pamphilus must convince his father, through the servant Davus, that he is willing to give up his sweetheart; in this manner he obtains her. For Alarcón, deception is not a means to an end. In a great many cases, it is a necessary part of dramatic development, but it is not the mainspring. Rather is it a weakness, and as such must be remedied. Don García's attempts to deceive his father, so that he may marry Jacinta, carry him too far and he must pay the penalty. His habit of manufacturing something from nothing becomes, consequently, a part of his character and not merely a solution of his difficulties.

The question of mistaken identity is likewise a dissimilarity. Actually, there is no mistaken identity in the Andrian. Glycerium is merely discovered to be Athenian born, such a discovery being necessary to resolve the comedies of Terence or Plautus. Without this, the marriage could not take place. The form of mixed identities employed by Alarcón is the one that Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina used to such advantage. In the comedias of these two we find a constant changing of personalities and use of

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disguises as a basis for intrigue.

García, in believing Jacinta to be Lucrecia, will not be saved by a mechanical solution of his difficulties. Alarcón follows the lead of the comedia de capa y espada which builds its action upon the mistaking of one person for another, and as a result García becomes involved with Lucrecia. Now the father steps in and with a firm Spanish hand guides García to the altar. No technical discovery will help him to regain Jacinta; his character is the chief concern of the dramatist, therefore he must be denied what he most wants. This is the crux of the play, that by lying, García has created a situation which robs him of his freedom. Such an outcome is not only the result of Alarcón's moral ideas, it is in line with his psychology of character study and his idea of dramatic development.

In structure Alarcón built upon foundations laid down by Lope de Vega; his technique follows the same trend.  
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 Julio Jiménez Rueda suggests that the dramatist's action usually moves among five people; two women and three men. The first lady has two or three choices, one of whom will turn to the second lady and one will be left behind. Confusion is caused by the first gentleman's courtship of

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3. Lope: La moza de cántaro, La dama boba, La hermosa fea, El acero de Madrid, El Domine Lucas, etc.  
 Tirso: Marta la piadosa, El vergonzoso en palacio, Don Gil de las calzas verdes, El amor y la amistad, etc.
4. Jiménez Rueda, Julio, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y su tiempo, Mexico, 1939, p. 11.

the second lady, because he is really in love with the first. It is in the writings of Lope de Vega that we see most plainly a model for this type of dramatic development. Two gentlemen seeking the hand of a beautiful lady, with a third furnishing additional jealousy and intrigue. A second lady, to whom one of the gentlemen transfers his affections, complicates the plot by her jealousy or by a confusion of names. Frequently the second gentleman is a noble or a king to whom the first must bow; often the just king intervenes and saves the situation.

Alarcón follows this technique time and again. We see the intervention of the king in No hay mal que por bien no venga and Ganar amigos, the misuse of royal power in Los favores del mundo and Los pechos privilegiados. Las paredes oyen, El examen de maridos, Mudarse por mejorarse and La verdad sospechosa present the same general design with approximate characters. Doña Ana of Las paredes oyen must choose between don Mendo and don Juan, with the conde furnishing the third love interest. It is to the latter that Lucrecia gives her hand. In El examen de maridos Inés has three suitors, from whom she selects the marqués, and Blanca must be satisfied with the conde. Mudarse por mejorarse offers Leonor the affections of García and of the marqués, and when she accepts the latter, García returns to doña Clara. Don Felix does not enter the love triangle, but aids and abets García. So it is with don Felix of La verdad



sospechosa. He helps don Juan in his love affair with Jacinta, while García pays court to the same lady. In the end it is García who must take second choice as well as Lucrecia.

Alarcón makes one departure from routine development in his comedia. This is when he embodies in his characters his conceptions of vice and virtue. As the characters evolve, their actions are controlled by these same conceptions. When the play ends it must bring a situation in which the characters receive the reward or punishment that they have earned. Accordingly, the galán who loses out is the one displaying the least nobility, as don Mendo of Las paredes oyen, don Juan of La prueba de las promesas and García of Mudarse por mejorarse. At times a dama stoops to tactics just as questionable as those of the galán, as do Blanca of El examen de maridos and Julia of Los favores del mundo. García of La verdad sospechosa is a victim of this technique, though his guilt is mild in comparison with that of don Mendo or doña Blanca. La verdad sospechosa is a character study, the outcome of which is foretold by García's actions and the manner in which Alarcón interweaves his characters, his motive, his moral code and his dénouement. There is no similar treatment of these elements visible in the Andrian, nor for that matter in any of the comedies of Terence.

5

Mr. John Brooks,<sup>5</sup> is convinced of a likeness between Alarcón's La verdad sospechosa and the Adelphoe of Terence. The Adelphoe tells of two sons of Demea: one, Aeschinus, has been adopted by the more pleasant and likeable uncle, Micio. Demea's harshness is such that his son Ctesipho turns for aid to Aeschinus. The latter succeeds in shielding his brother at his own expense, obtaining for him his slave girl, and for himself an Athenian lady. All this over the angry protests of Demea, but with Micio upholding his actions.

The fathers are the first compared. "In fact, Alarcón is indebted to Terence for the dramatic conception of D. Beltrán"<sup>6</sup> is Mr. Brook's conclusion after crediting to the two plays definite ideas concerning training and education of sons. "D. Beltrán is this ideal father visualized by Terence, a compromise between two extremes..... The sting of his reproofs is never unbearable."

The acrid Demea and the easy going Micio might by chance combine to make a composite of fatherly excellence but not necessarily in the mind of Alarcón. His morality was the moral de caballeros<sup>7</sup> and his father is to be measured by the yardstick of the pundonor, rather than by the exaggerated antics of the old men of Plautine or

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5. La verdad sospechosa: The Source and Purpose, Hispania, 1932, XV, pp. 243-52.  
 6. Ibid., p. 248  
 7. Menéndez y Pelayo, Historia de la poesía hispanoamericana, Madrid, 1911, I, p. 64.

Terentian comedies. Don Beltrán tells his son:

--No me llames padre,  
Vil; enemigo me llama;  
Que no tiene sangre mía  
Quien no me parece en nada.  
Quítate de ante mis ojos;  
Que por Dios, si no mirara--

--¿No te avergüenza que hayas  
Menester que tu criado  
Acredite lo que hablas?

III, 9

This is a Spanish don Beltrán, a father who considers family honor of first importance. He harks back to the dark tragedy of Virués and the refusal of Semíramis to believe that such a criminal could be her offspring.

No naciste  
Tú de mí, fiera horrible;  
Que es imposible, que tal hiciste.  
--Que no es posible ser de mí nacido  
Un monstruo tan disforme.<sup>8</sup>

And Don Beltrán continues angrily:

¿Es posible  
Que quien tanto su honra guarda  
Como yo, engendrarse un hijo  
De inclinaciones tan bajos?

III, 9

If in need of suggestions, Alarcón might full well turn for his father to Lope de Vega's El Dómine Lucas, a comedia portraying two students from Salamanca. Fulgencio, the father of Lope's play, is by turns deceived, perplexed and annoyed by the young gentleman's escapades, as is Alarcón's don Beltrán.

Fulgencio:       ;Ay pobre Viejo!

III, 16

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8. See Sargent, Cecilia V., Study of Dramatic Works of Cristóbal de Virués, New York, 1930, p. 148.

He cannot believe the sudden changes he sees in the young men:

¡Otro Floriano? ¡Bueno!  
Algo han estos dos comido. II, 6

But his final answer is that of don Beltrán to García:

Vive Dios, que has de morir! III, 16

The necessity of a didactic purpose in La verdad sospechosa to resemble that of Adelphoe is advanced by Mr. Brooks, and he asserts that both authors were primarily concerned with education. To sustain this argument he disregards the clever situations, the striking character study and the masterful development of one of Spain's best comedias. He lays at the door of the University of Salamanca the faults of García, urging disapproval of the school and stressing the importance of García's brother Gabriel to the plot.

Alarcón makes no attempt to make of Gabriel a protagonista; in fact he mentions him merely in passing as a reason for don Beltrán's calling of García from Salamanca to Madrid.

Don Beltrán: Pues como Dios se sirvió  
De llevarse a don Gabriel,  
Mi hijo mayor, con que en él  
Mi mayorazgo quedo,  
Determiné que, dejada  
Esta profesión, viniese  
A Madrid--  
--porque es bien  
Que las nobles casas den  
A su rey sus herederos. I, 2

The contention that Alarcón was not pleased with the university of his day is not upheld by his writings.

He appears, in fact, to have spent some of his happier years there.<sup>9</sup> He chose to describe the Salamancan school:

En esta Universidad  
donde la sabia Minerva  
hoy tiene el sagrado culto  
de que está celosa Atenás  
desde la puercia dócil  
a la ardiente adolescencia.

Cueva de Salamanca, I, p. 88

Julio Jiménez Rueda is of the opinion that Juan Ruíz de Alarcón se habrá sentido satisfecho con haber obtenido el grado por la Universidad de Salamanca, and quotes from La cueva de Salamanca:

Que los bachilleres de aquí  
de todas partes lo son                      10  
Que es de esta escuela exencion.

He further mentions that here, as elsewhere, Alarcón's deformity kept him apart from the life that went on about him, but he remained eight years, and his departure then, points only to family financial difficulties and the illness of his father. Y tal vez lo llama a Méjico para que pase con él los últimos años de su vida.<sup>11</sup>

"Alarcón agrees with the didactic theories of Terence, and obtains ideas for various scenes which in detail significance and development, are entirely unlike anything in the Adelphoe..... The characters in the play

9. In La cueva de Salamanca, Zamudio is trying to persuade don Diego to remain in Salamanca. Zamudio:

Señor, si a la corte vas  
Lo aborrecerás del todo.                      I, 1

10. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 54.

11. Ibid., p. 56.

are dissimilar, but there is evidence of Terentian inspiration here also.....Perhaps that extrañeza which Pérez de Montalbán finds in Alarcón and which Sr. Henríquez Ureña ascribes to his Mexican birth is merely an influence of the urbanity, elegance and restraint of Terence." This is Mr. Brook's contention, with the qualification that "the influence of the Adelphoe appears as an inspiration rather than imitation."<sup>12</sup>

Inspiration, then, may be the key to any door. We are expected to assume that Alarcón wrote as artistic a character study as La verdad sospechosa because Terence had written a didactic comedy about two brothers, and because he did not like Salamanca, an historical fact which has not been proven. Because of the very dissimilarities of situation, characters, development and even quotations advanced by Mr. Brooks he would have us concede a relationship between the Latin and the Spanish plays. Such sweeping assertions and general conclusions certainly cannot be accepted without much more definite proof.

If we are to acknowledge inspiration as a general source, the previously mentioned El Dómine Lucas might furnish a plentiful share. Lope presents two students from Salamanca, cousins, looking for love and adventure. Floriano, in an effort to win Lucrecia, gets himself entangled in lies and deceptions, until Alberto comes to his rescue and

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12. Brooks, op. cit., p. 251.

marries the other girl, Leonarda. Rosardo and Fabricio contribute their jealousy and love for Lucrecia (as happens in the Verdad sospechosa) to the general confusion. Many and pointed are the allusions to Salamanca, but one would hesitate to conclude that Lope de Vega was delving into the intricacies of education or that he had a didactic purpose in view.

Alberto to Floriano (embozados de estudiantes)

Si de Salamanca, adonde  
Estudias, vienes aquí  
A descuartizarlo así  
¿Qué efeto esperas? I, 4

Lucrecia has asked Rosardo:

¿Decís por el estudiante  
De Salamanca? I, 1

Rosardo's reply:

Anduvo bien;  
Pero es un poco arrogante.

Floriano: Aquí suelen venir  
De Salamanca estudiantes I, 4  
--Estudiantes? ¿De a dó bueno? I, 6

Decio answers: Salmanticense, Señor. I, 6

Floriano's question,

¿A qué ha venido?

draws much the same explanation as does the arrival of García in Madrid and Alarcón's own departure from Salamanca:

A acabar  
Un padre que ya caduca. I, 6

Lope de Vega also speaks of the University of Salamanca in El bobo del colegio.

- Don Juan: Vine a Salamanca a ver  
Lo que no veré jamás. I, 1
- Marín: ¡Ay Dios! quien fuera contigo,  
Por gozar en Salamanca  
Los aires de Tabladillo!  
-¿Tú a Salamanca? I, 13
- Garcerán: ¿Qué quieres? Cansame el traje  
Y el colegio está mohino  
De lo poco que me inclino,  
Como no sabe mi ultraje  
A asistir y estar en él. III, 19

It can scarcely be assumed that Alarcón's slight reference to the University of Salamanca in La verdad sospechosa is a criticism, without taking into account Lope's many and varied allusions to the same subject and his usage of the same material for plot and characters. Witness also Alarcón's sympathetic treatment of student life in his La cueva de Salamanca. In this comedia, Alarcón devotes himself to liberty of situations, haphazard magical effects and amusing intrigue. Three student galanes are well, though superficially, sketched, and the play seems written for the benefit and enjoyment of the students of Salamanca. Not only does an attitude of disapproval fail to manifest itself, but the author adapts the legend to his own purpose of rescuing the three conspirators. The house of Enrico, viejo grave, estudiante, becomes magically the cueva when justice is seeking the culprits don Diego, don Juan and Zamudio. Here they take refuge and learn from Enrico the magic of Merlin.

One of the galanes, the marqués de Villena, makes



a statement somewhat reminiscent of La verdad sospechosa and García's reason for being in Madrid.

Marqués:           En esto, de que murió  
                       Mi hermano mayor las nuevas  
                       Fueron causa que de Italia  
                       Diese a Castilla la vuelta.  
                       Fuíme a vivir a la corte;  
                       Que parece bien en ella  
                       Las cabezas de las casas  
                       A acompañar su cabeza.           I, p. 88

There is no clear reason for Alarcón's suggested drawing upon the Adelphoe for either lesson or title of La verdad sospechosa. Alarcón did not show himself to be interested in education, but rather in its result. He was deeply interested in knowledge. Enrico of La cueva de Salamanca phrases it:

                      Que el saber es gran riqueza.  
                       No es el fin, Andrés amigo,  
                       Del estudio, enriquecer;  
                       Fin del estudio es saber.  
                       --Saber pobre quiero más  
                       Que ignorante enriquecer.    I, p. 85

Alarcón's quarrel was not with the University nor its students, but with the contemptuous ridicule of the men among whom he strove to place himself as a dramatist. His student days were over, he was endeavouring to write comedias which would attract attention to his real and unusual abilities and at the same time to answer the cruel jibes of his famous contemporaries. He was fighting for a place in the literary and political world of Madrid, and his "didactic purpose" was to produce comedias which would lift him from the depths of disparagement to the pinnacle of success.

He had at hand many and valuable suggestions upon which to base plots and characters, and which contained unlimited ideas in keeping with his sense of morality. El libro de los enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor et de Patronio of Juan Manuel offered an excellent assortment of anecdotes and sketches for character study. Enxiemplo XI has been alluded to as a background for La prueba de las promesas.<sup>13</sup> In Enxiemplo XVIII,<sup>14</sup> Valbuena Prat finds a good model for Alarcón's Ganar amigos. La verdad sospechosa bears out the advice given by the Conde Lucanor in Enxiemplo XXVI -- Seguid verdad por la mentira foyr, ca su mal crece quien usa de mentir.

The popular refrán, used so successfully by Lope de Vega, was an integral part of the comedia of Alarcón. In many instances he, as did Lope, made the refrán the core of his play. In others he employed it to illustrate character study or the moral lesson he was advancing. For La verdad sospechosa what more could he ask as a basis than the saying, El mentiroso no gana más de que no le crean cuando dice verdad.

Jacinta:	Que la boca mentirosa Incorre en tan torpe mengua que solamente en su lengua Es la verdad sospechosa.	III, 6
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13. Jiménez Rueda, op. cit., p. 232.  
Valbuena Prat, Historia de la literatura española, I, Barcelona, 1937, pp. 171, 352.
14. Ibid., p. 171.

Tristán:

--Y verá

El senado que en la boca

Del que mentir acostumbra

Es la verdad sospechosa. III, 14  
15

García's real punishment, writes César Barja,  
is in having lied so much that when he does tell the truth  
no one will believe him. Here, then, are both title and  
dénouement.

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15. Barja, César, Libros y autores clásicos, Brattleboro,  
Vermont, 1929, p. 498.

## CHAPTER IV

## SPANISH INFLUENCES

LA ESTRELLA DE SEVILLA  
LOS PECHOS PRIVILEGIADOS, GANAR AMIGOS

The plays of Juan Ruíz de Alarcón indicate that he had in mind more than one purpose in writing them. Mere desire to create a good comedia would not suffice to bring out in his work that deep seated irritation shown against his enemies and his own limitations. In putting himself into the characters which he drew, the dramatist made of his comedia a medium of self defense.

This type of play, the comedia de carácter, embraced most of his successful writings because it was in the realm of the subjective that Alarcón could best express feelings and convictions. Most evident here is his seriousness of purpose and his effort to prove the rightness of his moral code. This very personal moral purpose which was unique with him, added to other elements, has helped to create the misconception of Plautine and Terentian influence upon Alarcón and the ensuing myth that he resembles the two Latin poets.

Neither in ideas nor characters has Alarcón approached the comedies of Plautus or Terence. Instead, he has reproduced most accurately the comedia of his time. In

his comedia de costumbres he changes types into characters, but he nevertheless stresses in them their strongly Spanish traits. Without the latter they would not be accepted and he could not accomplish his purpose of securing recognition.

Alarcón's ambitions were primarily political and he aspired to gain entry into these circles by means of his plays.<sup>1</sup> Consequently they had to conform to the examples set by his contemporaries, as well as to demonstrate their individuality through character delineation. The latter were often made with the obvious intention of flattering those who were influential. No dramatist could stray far from the path made by Lope de Vega and hope for success, for the pattern of the comedia was cut too deeply into the Spanish consciousness. Adviértase desde luego que Alarcón sí pertenece al ciclo de Lope, es debido al tiempo y a una como fatalidad sufrida por el genio de este dramaturgo.<sup>2</sup> Ruíz de Alarcón pertenece a él contra su voluntad.

Yet there are indications that Alarcón at times ascribed willingly to this influence of Lope's and even tried to imitate him. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe speaks of Alarcón's constant reading of Lope's works and of his reactions to them. Tomándole por modelo y pauta desde sus primeros secretos ensayos.<sup>3</sup> Laying aside the seven character studies

1. Teja Zabre, Alfonso, Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, Extracto con nuevos documentos y datos, Mexico, 1939, p. 15.
2. Abreu Gómez, E., Ruíz de Alarcón, Bibliografía crítica, Mexico, 1939, pp. 23, 30.
3. Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, Don Juan de Alarcón y Mendoza, Madrid, 1871, p. 54.

of Alarcón, we find that the majority of his plays follow the exact trend of the Lopean comedia. Types now take the place of his personalities, the pundonor becomes more powerful, his motives centralize in the love and jealousy so aptly maneuvered throughout the intrigues of Lope and Tirso.

Intrigue demanded action, and to supply sufficient force to the comedia, jealousy must be added. Upon rivalry the Spanish drama laid great emphasis, linking together love and honor in a dilemma that Mr. Vossler calls guerras de amor y honor.<sup>4</sup> Love was considered an adventure, the violence of its attacks was increased according to the nobility of blood inherited by the galán. Ninguna otra pasión, si no es del honor ofendido, le impulsará con más violencia.<sup>5</sup> The intervention of king or prince is one of the stereotyped practices which intensifies this struggle in many plays of both Lope and Alarcón.<sup>6</sup>

As a writer of comedias de capa y espada, Alarcón was a failure.<sup>7</sup> He could not impart to the caballero, the

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4. Vossler, Karl, Lope de Vega y su tiempo, Madrid, 1935, p. 299.
  5. Montesinos, José F., Algunas observaciones sobre la figura del donaire en el teatro de Lope de Vega. In Homenaje ofrecido a Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, 1925, I, p.480.
  6. Among the 24 plays of Alarcón nine show this element.. Two are comedias de carácter--Los favores del mundo and No hay mal que por bien no venga; two heroic plays--Ganar amigos and Los pechos privilegiados; and five comedias de intriga--El dueño de las estrellas, Siempre ayuda la verdad, El desdichado en fingir, La amistad castigada and the second part of El tejedor de Segovia.
  7. La industria y la suerte, El semejante a sí mismo, El desdichado en fingir, Siempre ayuda la verdad, Quién engaña más a quién, the romantic Tejedor de Segovia, 2nd part, etc. In the Anticristo Alarcón tried to create an epic, but the play was such a failure that it put an end to his literary career.

dama and the criado that zest with which Lope and Tirso created life and passion. He lacked an understanding of love and gaiety, and only in concentrating on nobility of soul could he produce characterizations. Thus in attempting to follow the theater of his contemporaries he stood in need of either a moral purpose or a model for his intrigue.

Two of Alarcón's comedias heroicas show strong probability of the presence of both of these factors, since they develop noticeably along lines of the capa y espada, at the same time attaining success. In them, Alarcón does not attempt to keep within the limits of simplified character study nor unified action, but he works into his galanes some of his own ideas concerning honor and nobility.

A principal motive here as elsewhere is the pundonor, but it has gathered such force that it now takes entire control, crowding out lesser incentives and relegating character study to a secondary position. This honor, a characteristic trait of the Spanish theater, was used in many ways by Alarcón. Not only does it move the wheels of action, it gives to his characters their manner of behaviour. Rodrigo of Los pechos privilegiados is first, last and always a caballero. He cannot betray a lady, neither will he revoke the word that he has given to the king. Rather than utter the simple explanation that would, in absolving him, place the blame on King Alfonso, he goes into exile and renounces the love of Leonor.

To the king: Solo yo quien me atreví  
A perderos por mi honor. I, 3

To Leonor: Ni puedo menos hacer,  
Ni más os puedo decir. I, 10

To the conde: Pues sois mi mayor amigo  
Y callo, debe de ser  
Imposible declararme. I, 11

Count Melendo, father of Leonor and Elvira, is governed by the same code. When he thinks that Ramiro has compromised the honor of his household he is about to kill him. Only the discovery that the real intruder is the king stays his hand.. He must yield to that part of the pundonor which recognizes the divine right of kings.. Nevertheless his anger is still great and because of his noble birth he feels that he can reproach the ruler who would cause the loss of Elvira's good name.

Conde: El Rey sois,  
Aunque no lo parecéis;  
Pero conmigo bastó  
Para que suelte el acero  
Solo el oír que sois vos.  
Y aunque pudiera este agravio,  
Puesto que tan noble soy  
Como vos, mover la espada  
A vengar mi deshonor,  
--el soltarla agora  
Me da venganza mayor. I, 18

It is interesting to note in this play the part played by Bermudo, brother of Elvira. Among the typically Spanish elements first introduced into the comedia by  
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Torres Naharro, Mr. Crawford mentions the zealous guardianship of the heroine's brother. The latter swears not only

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8. Crawford, J. P. W., Spanish Drama before Lope de Vega, Philadelphia, 1937, p. 90.



to avenge himself by killing his sister's betrayer but to kill the sister as well. Bermudo makes just such a threat:

Señor, pues es importante  
Averiguar si mi hermana  
Es con Ramiro liviana,  
Porque muera con su amante. I, 14

And when Bermudo and the conde find Ramiro in the apartment of Leonor, the brother cries:

¡Mueran! I, 19

Alarcón's solution is the only one compatible with both his theory of honor and his moral ideas. As is usual, he plays heavily upon the principle of friendship, bringing about a change of heart even in Ramiro. This rival of Rodrigo for the hand of Leonor tells the king:

Que aunque es mi competidor  
En amor, más ha podido  
En mi pecho agradecido  
La obligación que el amor. III, 4

To Elvira: Yo soy noble y soy su amigo. III, 7

It is the king who in relenting makes possible the return of Rodrigo and the conde to León and royal favor. This is a basic ending for the seventeenth century comedia, together with the marriage of the two couples and the love affair of the servants.

The one deviation that Alarcón makes in instances such as these consists of the extent to which he carries the spirit of vengeance. By stopping short of murder, he can introduce forgiveness and gratitude, thus reflecting his moral concepts, and still remain within the rigid code of Spanish honor.

Allusions have been made to the first appearance of the pundonor in the Comedia Himenea of Torres Naharro.

9  
La vida, por la fama es bien perdido

10

Américo Castro<sup>10</sup> is of the opinion that Lope de Vega as well as the dramatists before him, played an important part in the development of this characteristic. Honor and name were made identical, loss of honor was synonymous with loss of life. Vengeance had to be an immediate consequence of lost honor, honor itself was almost an exclusive inheritance of the nobility.

Alarcón's treatment of the pundonor is very aptly interpreted by succeeding paragraphs of Señor Castro's discussion. There were apparently different kinds of vengeance from which the dramatist might choose, depending upon how complete was the loss of one's honor. Unless the wife was accused of adultery, this loss was not considered absolute. There appeared also as a dramatic necessity the right of the king to pardon or condemn, and protests to be made against his violations of family honor. El concepto de la vida y del honor expresado en el drama debe estar de acuerdo con las opiniones de los moralistas...y el sistema social reflejado en el teatro era el de la España

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contemporánea. Here, then, is the background that we see mirrored in the comedia of Alarcón. Here are the intrinsic

9. Américo Castro, Observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII, Revista de filología española, 1916, III, p. 17

10. Ibid., pp. 1-50.

11. Ibid., p. 39

principles of the Spanish drama, their violence tempered somewhat by Alarcón's desire to illustrate his moral code.

Ganar amigos, a companion play to Los pechos privilegiados, deals with the same question of personal integrity and royal favor. Alarcón presents as a compendium of the virtues of chivalry, friendship and gratitude the marqués don Fadrique:

Basta para que yo cumpla  
Mi palabra, haberla dado I, 9

In Enxiemplo XVIII of the Conde Lucanor of don Juan Manuel is found the story of Pero Meléndez de Valdés, the caballero who enjoyed the favor of the king and was accordingly defamed by those who were envious. Such is the plight of Alarcón's marqués don Fadrique.

Fernando: --y no en vano  
Ocupáis en la privanza  
Del Rey el lugar más alto. I, 9

He spares the life of don Fernando, who has killed the marqués' brother in an argument over doña Flor.

Y si ya pude mataros  
Hago más en perdonaros. I, 12

Furthermore he does great favors for don Pedro and don Diego, two caballeros later to become his enemies because of jealousy. Finally, however, gratitude triumphs and the three he has defended offer to die for him. He has been willing to give his life rather than to desert his honor.

¿Qué? Morir, si castigar  
Sufre el cielo la inocencia. III, 17

When Ganar amigos studies the character of the marqués it does so strictly from the point of view of the pundonor. His is a personality composed of the strongest sentiments of the seventeenth century caballero. No matter what the cost, he stands ready to defend his noble heritage, to uphold the wishes of his king. Don Pedro describes him:

Ejemplo raro  
De valor y de piedad  
Símbolo de la amistad  
Gloria del nombre español.      III, 17

Both in the title and in the actions of the marqués are incorporated two of the refranes so often used as bywords in seventeenth century drama. One reads Ganar amigos es dar dinero a logro y sembrar en regadío, the other Amigos, más que hermanos. Of the second the marqués says:

Que trueco alegre y ufano  
A mi suerte agradecido  
El hermano que he perdido  
Por el amigo que gano.      I, 12

Don Fernando, like the marqués, refuses to avail himself of the opportunity of saving his life by revealing a secret. He has promised doña Flor that he will not mention their love affair, and this information he withholds even under pain of death. The marqués recognizes in him a kindred spirit:

Levantad, ejemplo raro  
De fortaleza y valor,  
Alto blasón del honor,  
De nobleza espejo claro.      I, 12

Don Diego, brother of Flor, takes for himself the same prerogative as does Bermudo of Los pechos privilegiados. He has threatened two years before in

Córdoba to kill don Fernando if he continues to make love to Flor. Now, Fernando has come to Sevilla, and Diego confronts his sister.

Porque sepa yo qué medio  
Tendré para dar seguro  
Prevención a lo futuro,  
Y a lo pasado remedio.  
--Si a tan justa confesión  
No te mueve la razón,  
Que te ha de obligar la muerte. I, 11

The king of Ganar amigos, unlike Alfonso of Los pechos privilegiados, embodies only the royal qualities of justice and mercy. He it is who solves the play by putting the marqués in prison so that his former enemies will come to his defense. The nobility of the marqués proven, the unchivalric deeds of don Diego, don Fernando and don Pedro may be pardoned by the king. It is the opinion of the king:

Que el derecho prevenido  
Más conveniente juzgó  
Conservar el bien de muchos  
Que castigar un error. III, 22

And he points out anew the raison d'etre of this comedia and the background for its dramatic climax:

Caballeros valerosos  
De España gloria y honor  
En cuyos heróicos pechos  
Cuatro espejos mira el sol.  
--Justicia tengo de hacer  
Y premiar vuestro valor.  
--Pues, cual arte puede dar  
A un reino fruto mayor  
Que el valor. III, 22

Thus, in tracing his plots, as well as in character development, Alarcón has followed the general lines of the comedias of his day. His situations are no

different from those set forth by other Spanish dramatists, except perhaps that they are less bloody. A great many events were at that time incorporated bodily from one comedia to another and devices used by dramatic writers were well known and well worn. The attempt of the king to seduce a beautiful girl, his discovery by her father or brother, the subsequent revenge of the king, the bribing of servants, the triumph of the wronged one through the loyalty of those about him, the motive of jealousy and the use of many disguises: these spell the comedia of Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Juan Ruíz de Alarcón.

A number of rather striking similarities may be observed between Alarcón's two comedias Ganar amigos and Los pechos privilegiados, and the comedia La estrella de Sevilla, which appeared in 1623.<sup>12</sup> The authorship of this latter play was formerly ascribed to Lope de Vega, but<sup>13</sup> present opinion discounts this theory. Whatever its sources, La estrella de Sevilla presents elements very typical of the seventeenth century Spanish comedia, and an example of the plays of Alarcón's contemporaries. As such, it may well offer a basis for comparison.

Forming a background for both La estrella de Sevilla and Los pechos privilegiados stands the monarch's

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12. Anibal, C. E., Observations on La estrella de Sevilla, Hispanic Review, II, no. 1, January, 1934, p. 38.
  13. Several poets have been suggested by various critics, among them Claramonte, Vélez de Guevara, Pedro de Cárdenas y Angulo. See Morley and Bruerton, The Chronology of Lope de Vega's comedias, pp. 284-5.

right to do as he pleases, no matter what the cost to others.

La estrella de Sevilla

Los pechos privilegiados

Sancho:

Mas no es justo  
Que al honor contraste el gusto.  
II, 13

Rodrigo:

De modo que la razón  
No ha de ser ley, sino el gusto.  
I, 4

---un rey

La hace entre sus labios ley  
Y a la ley todo se humilla.  
III, 10

Sin advertir que las leyes  
En las manos de los reyes  
Que las hacen, son de cera,  
Y que puede un rey, que intenta  
II, 13

In each case the king is urged by a favorite to take vengeance against the one who has offended him:

Arias:

Pues en el orbe español  
No hay más leyes que tu gusto.  
II, 8

Ramiro:

Pues lo que manda el Rey nunca  
es injusto.  
II, 3

The king, don Sancho, has seen and covets the lovely Estrella of Sevilla. He tries to bribe her brother, Busto Tabera, with royal favors, but Busto refuses to betray his sister, and when the king enters her rooms at night, forces him to a duel. Similarly, king Alfonso of

Leon asks Rodrigo to press his case with Elvira, daughter of noble Count Melendo. Rodrigo refuses, and must leave the court in disgrace. Here it is that Alarcón departs from the cruelty of the earlier capa y espada play. The king orders Busto killed by Sancho Ortiz, sweetheart of the Estrella, and Sancho must keep the word he gave before knowing his victim's name. Rodrigo does not have to kill, but he must bear the heavy hand of royal disfavor. So must the Count, head of the family and defender of his daughter's honor against the king's night visit. Both kings repent of their anger, though for Sancho it is too late. The shadow of the pundonor must now stand between the lovers, and they cannot accept the king's offer of retribution.

La Estrella de Sevilla

Los pechos privilegiados

Estrella:

Señor, no ha de ser mi esposo

Hombre que a mi hermano mata

Aunque le quiero y le adoro. Vase. III, 18

Sancho:

Y yo, señor, por amarle

No es justicia que lo sea. Vase.

Rodrigo can forgive and be forgiven, as can Elvira.. Alarcón has worked into his play a shading of loyalty which was generally lacking in the drama of pure intrigue. His choice as to conception of honor, mentioned previously, is well illustrated here. It is no longer a stony, unyielding virtue that points the outcome, but a noble quality that admits of loyalty and repentance.



La Estrella de SevillaLos pechos privilegiados

Don Rodrigo:

No hay ofensas,  
No hay amistades ni amores  
Que en tocando a la lealtad  
No olviden los pechos nobles.

III, 17

And the king:

Llegad, Melendo, a mis brazos  
--Que disculpados errores  
Son las que causa el honor

The two kings are torn by love and jealousy:

Rey Sancho:

Epiciclo que me abrasa  
Con fuego que el alma siente.

I, 2

Rey Alfonso:

Y es tan alto mi cuidado  
Que no puede tener modo  
De remediar mi pasión.

I, 3

Busto of the Estrella is not the polished gentleman that is portrayed in Alarcón's Rodrigo. Both are brave, loyal, and exceedingly determined. When it comes to modesty, they part company.

Busto swaggers:

Si más fuera  
Cubierto me hubiera hoy;  
Pero si Tavera soy  
No ha de cubrirse Tavera.

Rey:

Notable filosofía de honor! I, 5

Rodrigo is quiet, but firm:

Rey: Cubríos.

Rodrigo: Señor--

Rey: Rodrigo, cubierto  
Ha de estar el que merece  
Que un rey le visite. II, 10

Busto has been offered many inducements to allow the king entrance to his house.

La Estrella de Sevilla

Los pechos privilegiados

Rey:

Sois un grande caballero,  
Y en cámara y palacio  
Quiero que asistáis despacio.  
I, 5

Alarcón's Count Melendo points out to Nuño, the faithful servant who has been approached by Arias for the king, the need to watch the doors.

Conde:

Hoy a gozar de mi lado  
En mi cámara subieras,  
Si no tuviera segura  
Con tal portero mi casa. I, 14

Arias questions the king of Estrella, and Alarcón has Nuño ask Ramiro (who is doubling for the king):

Arias:

¿Solo te aventuras hoy? II, 1

Nuño:

¿No venís solo? I, 16

As the king enters Estrella's rooms, he says to Matilde, the servant:

Rey:

Venero en el cielo octavo  
esta Estrella de Sevilla. II, 1

King Alfonso calls the door of Elvira's room:

La del mismo cielo. I, 17

Friendship is stressed by both authors.

Sancho to Busto:

Mas no cumples con la ley  
De amistad. I, 9

La Estrella de SevillaLos pechos privilegiados

Rodrigo to the king:  
 Nunca disculpa la ley  
 De la amistad el error. I, 3

An interesting character transition can be noted here in the formation of Alarcón's damas. The independence and freedom that he gave them shows its growth with their development. The first reaction to the proposition of the king brings much the same answer.

Estrella:  
 ¿Qué respondo?  
 Lo que ves (Vuelve la espalda)  
 --a tan livianos recados  
 da mi espalda la respuesta. I, 12

Elvira:  
 Que si no, yo he de guardarme  
 De quien mi infamia desea.  
 Y adiós, Ramiro; que viene  
 Gente. I, 7

Once the king has gained access to the lady's house, he asks:

Rey: Ramiro:  
 ¿Estrella? II, 1 ¿Y el hermoso cielo mío? I, 15

Estrella's servant Matilde answers:

Matilde:  
 Durmiendo está,  
 Y el cuarto en que duerme, oscuro. II, 1

But note the education accorded Elvira:

Nuño:  
 Elvira estará despierta  
 Que es muy dada a la lición  
 De libros. I, 15

Furthermore, Alarcón allows Elvira a chance to reproach the king for his daring, before the arrival of her father and brother.

La Estrella de SevillaLos pechos privilegiados

Elvira:  
;Qué atrevimiento!

Arias, royal henchman of the Estrella, has been commanded to leave the king and keep watch outside. Ramiro, shielding the identity of his king, tells Nuño to leave them.

Rey:  
Vete  
--Desviado de la calle  
en parte donde te halle. II, 1

Ramiro:  
Idos, y estad  
En espía, y avisad  
Si de alguien somos sentidos. I, 17

As the approaching footsteps of the master are heard, Matilde and Ramiro exclaim:

Matilde:  
;Perdida soy! II, 4

Ramiro:  
Perdidos somos, señor. I, 19

Then the dramatic discovery of the king, on the one hand by Busto, on the other by the Count and his son.

Rey, to Busto:  
Detente  
Que soy el Rey. II, 5

No es mi intención ofenderte  
sino aumentar más tu honra.

Rey, to Conde:  
Teneos  
al Rey. I, 19

Que esta ofensa ha acrisolado,  
No manchado, vuestro honor.

The valiant Count Melendo of Los pechos privilegiados does not keep his sword drawn against the

king, but he suggests to him:

Permitid que al menos  
Llegue a la calle con vos,  
Porque quien salir os viere  
Entienda que mereció  
Esta visita Melendo,  
Y no su hija.

I, 19

His speech recalls that of Busto Tabera of the Estrella when the king first came to his house and was refused admittance.

Busto: Fuera, señor, de que en casa  
Tengo una hermosa doncella.  
--Y no sonara muy bien  
En Sevilla, cuando sepan  
Que a visitarla venís.

I, 11

The king of Estrella is very angry with Busto for forcing him to fight, and Alarcón's king is just as angry..

La Estrella de Sevilla

Los pechos privilegiados

Rey:  
Desto villano ofendido  
Voy; pero vengarme espero. II, 6

Rey:  
Vengaréme, Ramiro; por los cielos,  
No sufriré mi ofensa ni mis celos.  
II, 3

Busto is afraid of the king's resentment, and warns his sister of what has happened. The Count, too, is very worried.

Busto:  
Esto me ha pasado, Estrella;  
Nuestro honor está en peligro;  
Yo he de ausentarme por fuerza.

La Estrella de SevillaLos pechos privilegiados

Conde:

Esto me pasó, Rodrigo  
Con Alfonso.

--Melendo, el Rey vuestra  
deshonra piensa

Huid; que con un rey no hay  
más defensa. II, 1

Sancho, in answer to the king's request that he kill his enemy secretly, declares that it is not the thing to do. The Conde, finding the king in his house, feels the same way about the conduct of a king.

Sancho:

Y un rey, solo por ser rey,  
se ha de respetar mejor. II, 11

Conde:

Si el rey debe estimar menos  
La vida, que la opinión  
De justo. I, 19

Furious at Busto, the king insists, and Sancho agrees to the royal command to do away with Busto. The Count, saddened by Rodrigo's disfavor in the eyes of the king, tries to intercede for him.

Sancho:

Nunca me he visto  
Tan honrado como estoy,  
Pues a vuestro lado asisto. II, 11

Melendo:

Dos cosas, gran señor, he de pedir  
Una es honrarme a mí, y otra  
es serviros. II, 4

Sancho finds himself face to face with Busto, whom he must kill, and who is offering him the hand of the Estrella. Rodrigo is confronted by the Count, but refuses to reveal his reason for not marrying Leonor.

La Estrella de SevillaLos pechos privilegiados

Sancho:

Casarme quise con ella,  
Mas ya no, aunque me la dáis. II, 14

Rodrigo:

Harto os digo con partir  
Con callar y no casarme. II, 11

Having accepted the commission of the king, Sancho receives a paper containing the name of his victim. Ramiro is sent to look for Rodrigo, who has been forced to go into hiding.

Rey:

Que este papel, para abono,  
De mi firmado lleváis. II, 11

Rey:

--esa carta  
Le llevaréis de mi mano. III, 4

Both kings, sorry for the trouble they have caused, appeal to their partners in crime.

Rey:

Don Arias  
¿Qué he de hacer? ¿Qué me aconsejas  
entre confusiones tantas? III, 17

Rey to Ramiro:

Que haré en confusion igual  
II, 13

The monarchs now regain their composure, their dignity and their sense of justice.

Rey:

Estrella, esta es mi palabra.  
Rey soy, y debo cumplirla. III, 18

Rey to Elvira:

--y porque no pueda  
Quejarse tu padre el conde  
De mi palabra rompida  
Dame la mano. III, 17

Additionally, in the story of Ganar amigos are to be heard further echoes of the Estrella de Sevilla. Don Fernando, in particular, has been forced to kill for the sake of honor, but will not reveal the reason. Don Diego and don Pedro contribute to the downfall of the marqués, but cannot let friendship go unrewarded. The marqués is shocked to find that his brother has been the victim of don Fernando, as was Estrella overwhelmed when told about Sancho.

La Estrella de Sevilla

Ganar amigos

Estrella:

¡Mi hermano es muerto, y le ha muerto  
Sancho Ortiz! II, 19

Marqués:

Que mi hermano es muerto,  
--Y que éste fué el homicida.  
I, 8

Sancho had told the king:

Cuerpo a cuerpo he de matalle. II, 11

And the marqués reminds Fernando:

--es llano  
Que cuerpo a cuerpo los dos  
Debo vengarme. I, 12

After killing Busto, Sancho wants nothing further than to die. Don Diego, brother of Flor, is reproaching her for having been the cause of the death of don Sancho, the murdered one.

Sancho:

--Quede tu espada envainada  
En mi pecho. II, 14



La Estrella de SevillaGanar amigos

Don Diego:

Muestra, y piensa que no rompe  
Mi espada tu pecho infame. I, 11

Stress is laid throughout both the Estrella de Sevilla and Ganar amigos on the supreme importance of keeping a promise.

Sancho:

Que cumplo lo que prometo. III, 6

Marqués:

Ya he cumplido  
Mi palabra. I, 12

In refusing to reveal his secret and so betray his honor, Sancho takes refuge in stubborn silence. The marqués tries to learn what was back of his brother's death at the hands of Fernando.

Sancho:

Yo soy quien soy,  
Y siendo quien soy, me venzo  
A mí mismo con callar. III, 6

Marqués:

Pues si callar os prometo,  
El ser quien soy, ¿no me abona?  
--Pues también me venzo a mí. I, 12

The king has received Sancho's promise to avenge his monarch by killing the man who has angered him. Don Fernando swears eternal friendship for the marqués, who has saved his life.

Rey to Sancho:

Dadme esa palabra y mano. II, 11

Fernando to marqués:

La palabra y mano os doy. I, 12

The divine right of kings and the impossibility of any law that would govern them is repeated constantly by Alarcón as well as by the author of the Estrella. An old Spanish refrán was accustomed to say Reyes rompen leyes, and another Rey nuevo, ley nueva. These proverbs are well taken into account by the two dramatists.

La Estrella de Sevilla

Ganar amigos

Sancho, speaking of the king:

Mas no hay ley que aquesto obligue.

II, 13

Don Diego:

No hay ley

Encinas, que obligue al Rey.

III, 8

In Alarcón's play, don Pedro is sent to Granada by the marqués, in an attempt to save his life.. The king of Estrella has ordered Sancho exiled to Granada or Gibraltar for the same purpose.

Rey:

Hoy de la muerte se escapa

Sancho Ortiz, y mi promesa

Sin que se entienda se salva. III, 15

Marqués:

Con este piadoso medio

Quiero dilatar su muerte;

Porque entre tanto la suerte

Le disponga otro remedio.

--De la muerte os libraré

O no seré quien soy. II, 15

Sancho cannot believe that his king would order an unjust murder, and the marqués intervenes for the life of don Pedro.

La Estrella de SevillaGanar amigos

Sancho:

Pues, ¿cómo muerte en secreto -  
A un culpado se le da? II, 11

Marqués:

Vos mandáis que con secreto  
Le mate. III, 3

Estrella and doña Ana come before their kings to plead for justice and vengeance, in the one case for the loss of a brother, in the other for lost honor.

Estrella:

Quise a Tabera, mi hermano.  
-Y como a padre le tuve.

-El fiero golpe en mi hermano,  
-Sola he quedado

-Hazme justicia, Señor.

-Déjame que yo le juzgue

III, 3

Ana:

Don Fernando de Castro  
--Me dió el ser y la dicha.

--Su fin arrebatado  
--Me dejó solo en orfandad funesta.

--Justicia, Rey, Justicia.

--Baste para vengarme y castigallo.  
III, 5

The marqués has been unjustly imprisoned, and don Fernando takes up the cry of Sancho Ortiz.

Sancho:

¿Qué he de hacer?

--Una cumplida palabra. II, 11, 16

Fernando:

¿Qué hemos de hacer, corazón?

--Palabra de amigo fiel

Le di y me dió, y ha cumplido.

III, 11

Beginning to regret the imprisonment of Sancho and the marqués, the two kings give to Estrella and don Pedro a ring which will enable them to free the prisoners.

La Estrella de Sevilla

Ganar amigos

Rey to Estrella:

Tomad esta sortija. III, 3

Rey to don Pedro:

Este sello lo será

(Dale una sortija) III, 13

The marqués steadfastly refuses to accept the offers of his friends to liberate him, as did Sancho refuse to place the blame for Busto's murder. Finally the guilty ones can no longer withhold their confessions.

Rey:

Yo mandé

Matalle, y aquesto basta

Para su descargo.

--Digo que es verdad. III, 18

Don Fernando:

Yo le maté, culpa es mía.

Doña Flor:

Esta es

La verdad. III, 19

The king will find for Estrella a husband to take the place of Sancho, in an effort to atone as much as possible for his terrible mistake. Alarcón's king commands a double wedding.

Rey:

Casarla pienso, y casarla

Como merece. III, 18

Rey:

Dad pues la mano de esposo,

Don Diego a doña Ana; y vos

Escoged esposo, Flora

Examination of the foregoing comedias leads to the belief that Alarcón was strongly influenced by La Estrella de Sevilla. The many resemblances revealed do not necessarily establish the direct amount of this influence, particularly since the Estrella embodied so many of the stock situations and phrases of its time. But the circumstances under which these situations and phrases are used and even worded by Alarcón are too similar to those of the Estrella to be mere coincidence.

Alarcón proved himself to be interested in plays of this type and made various other attempts to produce comedias de capa y espada. His talent did not lie in this direction, however, and he achieved very little success beyond Ganar amigos and Los pechos privilegiados. The influence of the Estrella could well account for the effectiveness of Alarcón's two plays. Because it was one of the best comedias of its day it offered him a perfect basis for the comedia that he was trying to evolve. Here was an accepted seventeenth century Spanish background, to which we need add only his personifications of nobility and his ideas of the pundonor.

In these personifications Alarcón excelled, as was demonstrated by his comedias de carácter. The art of intrigue he did not master so well, and it is most likely therefore that he adapted to his needs just such comedias as La Estrella de Sevilla.

## CHAPTER V

ADDITIONAL SPANISH INFLUENCES  
REFRANES, CHARACTER DELINEATION

Much stress has been laid on Alarcón's use of the Spanish refrán, but this tendency must not be ignored nor minimized. The refrán was an important link in the chain of comedias which were welded from material offered by the Spain of several centuries. These refranes appeared first in print in 1490, in a refranero called Refranes que dizen las viejas tras el fuego, and attributed to the Marqués de Santillana.<sup>1</sup>

The first quarter of the seventeenth century, in Mr. Hayes' opinion, was the golden age of the proverb in Spain, and this folklore reached its peak of popularity in 1611. At that time the Tesoro de la lengua castellana of Sebastián de Covarrubias made its appearance and sometime later the finest of all collections, the Vocabulario de refranes of Maestro Gonzalo Correas.<sup>2</sup> Particularly at the University of Salamanca did the interest in proverb

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1. Hayes, F. C., The Collecting of Proverbs in Spain before 1650, Hispania, XX, 1937, p. 85. Among the important collections in circulation during the 16th century were Blasco de Garay's Cartas en refranes, Libro de refranes copilados por el orden del A B C by Mosén Pedro Vallés, Refranes glosados of Sebastián de Horozco, Refranes o proverbios en romance of Hernán Núñez and Juan Mal Lara's Philosophía vulgar.
  2. Ibid., pp. 91, 92.

collecting manifest itself. This University (to repeat a former statement) was the center of proverb lore. Here were established five of the principal collectors of refranes, one of whom was Maestro Gonzalo Correas,<sup>3</sup> and where the usefulness of this form of expression was stressed.

Alarcón, while a student at the University of Salamanca, undoubtedly absorbed much of this enthusiasm. His plays show that he was fully aware of the dramatic possibilities of the refranes and that he used them throughout his work to very good advantage. In so doing he also followed the example set by such writers as Lope de Vega and Cervantes, for they constantly expressed their ideas concerning both actions and characters through the medium of these<sup>4</sup> proverbs.

The manner in which these refranes are employed distinguishes them entirely from any aphorisms that may be found in Terence or Plautus. The comedies of Plautus contain very few, and this study has brought out the fact that they were inserted in an indifferent fashion, with no bearing on situations or characters. Terence, intent upon the structure

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3. Miguel Mir, Real Academia Española, Introducción to Vocabulario de refranes, Maestro Gonzalo de Correas, pp. vii-xv. The other four were Sebastián de Orozco, Hernán Núñez, Sebastián de Covarrubias and Juan de Mal Lara.  
See also Hayes, op. cit., p. 93.
  4. Porque España, entre todos los países, es, por antonomasia, la tierra de los refranes, porque refranes en acción, y así lo revelan sus propios títulos, son muchas de las mejores obras de nuestro inmortal teatro de los siglos XVI and XVII. Francisco Rodríguez Marín, Más de 21000 refranes, p. L.

of his comedy, placed his emphasis on smoothness and technical mastery rather than on ideas or characters. Hence his seriousness of purpose followed other channels than did that of Alarcón. Since Terence was essentially a translator of the Greek of Menander,<sup>5</sup> any maxims contained in the latter's comedy would be apt to receive only passing consideration..

Alarcón, on the contrary, set out to prove a thesis by means of character delineation and for both purpose and method he had a perfect genesis in the refranero. As titles he chose the sayings: No hay mal que por bien no venga, Las paredes oyen, La culpa busca la pena y el agravio a la venganza, Quien mal anda en mal acaba, Siempre ayuda la verdad, Todo es ventura. The subtitle for El examen de maridos was the refrán Antes que te cases, mira lo que haces, for Los pechos privilegiados another title was Nunca mucho costó poco. One of two titles originally given to Ganar amigos was the refrán Lo que mucho vale mucho cuesta.

In some cases Alarcón took the idea of a refrán for his plot without repeating the actual words in his title.. La verdad sospechosa, for example, is another way of describing what happens to the mentiroso when he lies too much. This point is brought out repeatedly in the ending of the comedia. Mudarse por mejorarse carries out

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5. Sellar, W. Y., The Roman Poets of the Republic, Oxford, 1881, p. 215.



the thought of the refrán--Mudé y remudé; pero no mejoré. Also as a subtitle for this comedy Quien a hierro hiere - a hierro muere has been suggested. In Quién engaña más a quién can be seen the working of the phrase Engaña a quién te engaña; que en este mundo todo es magaña.

Interspersed in the comedias of Alarcón are countless refranes, spoken by the different characters to illustrate a point in question or to present a phase of character study which Alarcón wishes to emphasize.. Among the most noticeable of these quotations is the repetition of the theme of Las paredes oyen. It is through this simple expedient that don Mendo's hypocrisy becomes known and the moral of the play is explained.

Ana: Y a toda ley hablar bien  
Porque las paredes oyen. II, 7

Celia and Lucrecia in turn are questioned by Mendo as to the manner in which they have learned of his statements and each replies:

Las paredes oyen. II, 8 III, 17

Don Juan gives this same reply to the duque (II, 8) and Beltrán closes the play with the advice:

Miren que oyen las paredes,  
Y a toda ley hablar bien. III, 17

La prueba de las promesas repeats this same phrase, using it as a warning against gossip:

Tristán: Con Chacon he conocido  
Que oyen las paredes. III (no scenes)

Don Illán of La prueba de las promesas quotes the proverb which Cervantes put into the mouth of Sancho Panza.

Pues si sabe más el loco  
En su casa, que en la ajena  
El cuerdo --

adding: ,porqué condena  
Al sabio el que sabe poco? II

El examen de maridos, in addition to the refrán upon which the action is based (Antes que te cases, mira lo que haces), mentions various sayings of similar origin. Clavela, forced to assist Blanca in her plot against the marqués, is displeased with her mistress.

Clavela:

Dicen que un loco hace ciento,  
Y ya, por la ceguedad  
De Blanca, en mí la verdad  
Del refrán experimento. II, 13

Ochavo has been hiding in the chimney at the house of doña Inés in order to hear what is being said against his master. He jumps from the roof and falls at the feet of the marqués.

Ochavo:

Y haber el refrán cumplido  
De si pegare, y si no,  
Tizne. III, 12

The marqués and the conde demonstrate their loyalty to each other by urging that Inés accept the rival's hand. Each presents reasons, therefore, why he should not be the chosen one. The marqués tells Inés that the conde is more perfect than he, that esteem and honor make a better foundation for marriage than love.

Marqués:

Pues nos dice el castellano  
Refrán, que es breve evangelio,  
Que, quien por amores casa,  
Vive siempre descontento. III, 16

In his turn, the conde assures Inés that love is the best basis and that even though the marqués may not be perfect, love will solve all difficulties.

Conde:

Pues nos advierte el refrán  
Castellano, que lo feo  
Amado parece hermoso. III, 16

In three different plays is to be found a repetition of the same refrán, a repetition not infrequently made by Alarcón. La cueva de Salamanca shows us three estudiantes about to be arrested for their pranks. Don García remarks:

La que viene es la justicia

and don Juan adds:

Aquí es Troya. I (no scenes)

Inés of El semejante a sí mismo is trying to learn from Sancho whether or not his master is going away and Sancho does not want her to know.

Inés: ¿Al fin te vas al Pirú?

Sancho: (ap. Aquí es Troya). I, 6

Arnesto of La industria y la suerte appears below Blanca's window at night, posing as don Juan, in order to talk to her. Suddenly don Juan himself appears.

Arnesto: ¿Si es don Juan?

Sancho: Sin duda alguna,  
Y Troya ha de ser aquí. I, 18

La verdad sospechosa mentions one of the many proverbs which served as titles for comedias of Lope de Vega: El perro del hortelano (que no come las berzas ni quiere que otro coma de ellas). Jacinta does not wish to

lose don Juan before she is sure of García, accordingly Isabel advises her to find a way to talk to García.

Isabel:      Que don Juan es desta suerte  
                 El perro del hortelano.                      I, 10

Among the numerous refranes that Lope incorporated as titles for his comedias were these two: Dineros son calidad and Pobreza no es vileza. Alarcón apparently did not agree with the latter statement and took occasion to answer it. In La industria y la suerte, don Juan, handicapped by poverty, presents another of Alarcón's bitter complaints against his own handicaps.

Juan:          Sé que yo soy caballero,  
                 Y cuando el lugar entero  
                 A Arnesto agradar intente,  
                 Es un hombre solamente  
                 Fabricado de dinero.  
                 ¿Qué tengo que saber más?

don Beltrán:  
                 Que si he de decir la verdad,  
                 Dineros son calidad  
                 Y la pobreza es vileza                      I, 7

These form but a small proportion of the refranes utilized by Alarcón throughout his comedias. It would be an endless and a needless task to attempt to quote them all. They demonstrate for themselves the distinctive manner in which they were woven into the pattern of the Spanish comedia and the unique mission which they fulfilled in rounding out its development.

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Referring again to Alarcón's attitude toward the criado, it would seem that further illustration of this Spanish character is justified here. Alarcón shows in his plays a conception of criado and gracioso similar to that of Lope de Vega. <sup>6</sup> Señor Montesinos is of the opinion that Lope may have found some of his comic types in Classical comedy, but that in such cases they kept their original characters and remained exclusively as comic figures. The important Lopean role of donaire, filled by lacayos, graciosos and criados is not an entirely comic one and is not to be confused with the above types..

The lacayo is the most humorous of the three and the one which Alarcón's servants occasionally claim not to resemble. The gracioso has a great deal of the character of the pícaro, though generally of much better moral standards. The criado quite often acts as a conscience for his master and either justifies or condemns him.. Most of them show great loyalty and all reflect the actions of the master, saying, soy doble de mi amo. La figura del donaire no es exclusivamente donairoso, y criados y lacayos andan por el teatro de Lope que tienen los rasgos fisonómicos del gracioso, y no son graciosos propiamente. <sup>7</sup>

Alarcón develops the various types, but follows Lope in the tendency to combine in one character the

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6. Montesinos, José F., Algunas observaciones sobre la figura del donaire en el teatro de Lope de Vega, in Homenaje ofrecido a Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, 1925, I, P. 503.

7. Ibid., pp. 473-503.

qualities of servant and gracioso. However he does not offer as colorful a variety of criados and graciosos as do both Lope and Tirso; he concentrates instead upon raising the status of his servant. Possibly his stay at the University of Salamanca enabled him to know and to study the many students who earned their way as servants or companions and caused him to give to his criado de confianza a more serious mind. Alarcón does not waste an opportunity to impress upon his readers his belief that nobility of station is an accident of birth. But for such a whim of fortune, he asserts, the servant might be master, and his erudition and background may well be on a par with that of his señor. There are many of these well bred intelligent criados and graciosos in the plays of Alarcón who say as does Tristán in La prueba de las promesas:

mas creed  
Que aunque es sirviente Tristán  
Es al menos bien nacido. I (no scenes)

Encinas of Ganar amigos tells don Diego that a great many servants are as worthy as their masters:

Y por Dios ha visto Encinas  
En más de cuatro ocasiones  
Muchos criados leones  
Y muchos amos gallinas. III, 8

In La verdad sospechosa Tristán indicates his noble birth, referring also to the pretensiones which were the source of much disappointment to Alarcón.

Fuí  
Pretendiente, por mi mal.

García:

¿Cómo en servir has parado?

Tristán:

Señor, porque me han faltado  
La fortuna y el caudal;  
Aunque quien te sirve, en vano  
Por mejor suerte suspira.

I, 3

Hernando of Los favores del mundo insists upon his

individuality:

Mas no ha de haber cosa en mí  
De lacayo de comedia.

II, 2

The typically funny gracioso of the comedia is well represented by Zamudio of La cueva de Salamanca. He is designated as estudiante, gracioso, thus receiving credit for his education.

Diego:

Calla, bachiller.

Zamudio:

En artes  
Por Salamanca lo soy.

I (no scenes)

Some of his escapades, however, are reminiscent in character of the amazing adventures of Sancho Panza. He has been told to collect two teeth from the verdugo and we see him following this queer looking object and saying plaintively:

--Camarada,  
Dos dientes me habéis de dar,  
Pues a mí me han de importar,  
Y a vos no os sirven de nada.  
Abrid la boca.

II

He is also complaining of things not being what they seem:

Convertir una mujer  
En leon, y cuando embisto  
A tocar manos y labios,  
Topar garras y colmillos;  
¡Vive Dios, que fué mal hecho!

II

The contribution of the pícaro to the character of the servant is illustrated in El semejante a sí mismo with Juan's reproof of Sancho:

Parecídome has lacayo  
De comedia, pues extrañas  
Que yo no te comunique  
Los secretos de importancia.  
-¡El diablo, pícaro! (Dale)

Sancho: ¡Ay, Dios,  
Que me ha derribado un diente! I, 1

Alarcón gives an importance to the criada which equals that of the gracioso. She not only completes the picture of loyalty to her mistress and the parallel of her love affair, she further takes upon herself the independence and haughty manners of the dama. Inés of Los favores del mundo expresses well this attitude plainly to be seen in the majority of Alarcón's comedias.

Inés: No sé yo, por vida mía  
Desde cuando acá, o por dónde  
Le ha tocado, señor conde,  
De alcaide o de guarda-damas  
Desta casa.  
--Y al mismo rey me atreviera,  
Si tanta ocasión me diera. I, 13

Los pechos privilegiados gives to Jimena almost the status of a protagonist in ending the play. She it is who has been responsible for the rearing of the noble Rodrigo and she now steps forward to protect him.

--me ofrezco  
A magollar a puñadas  
A quien vos praza, los huesos. II, 8

She does not hesitate to interfere even with the king when Rodrigo is in danger.



(Coge en brazos al Rey, y llévaselo) II, 20

But she also maintains her loyalty to the king and defends him in spite of his previous attacks on Rodrigo:

Porque Jimena non sofre  
Que en contra de su rey cuide  
Orgullecer ningún home. III, 16

The king speaks of the custom of rewarding the nobility of a proud lineage:

Y quede memoria y fama  
De Jimena--  
-Ella y cuantas merecieren  
Dar a los infantes nobles  
De vuestro linaje el pecho,  
De hoy en adelante gocen  
Privilegio de nobleza. III, 17

The haughtiness of the damas of Alarcón's comedias is acknowledged, this trait being looked upon by some critics as mere coldness. Others see in Alarcón's more scheming ladies the influence of the clever and designing women portrayed by Tirso de Molina. Among those bearing a resemblance to the latter are Julia of Los favores del mundo, Blanca of El examen de maridos and Sol of La industria y suerte. As a general rule, however, Alarcón seems to have preferred to present his dama as an example of propriety, as opposed to some of the types which he criticizes in his plays.

Anarda of Los favores del mundo is of this school, with the addition of much of the afore-mentioned arrogance.

Anarda:

Necio, descortés, grosero,  
Si valiente caballero  
Fuera bien mirar que aquí  
Estaba yo. I, 3

She further demonstrates her ability to take care of herself in defying her uncle, and alludes to the much discussed family honor:

¡Señor don Diego, mi tío  
Da tan cobarde consejo!  
¿Somos Girones o no?  
¿Hanos el valor faltado?  
--Yo basto; que aunque mujer,  
Soy en efeto Girón. II, 11

In Mudarse por mejorarse doña Clara must uphold this family honor and reproach the marqués for having spoken to Leonor alone:

En el alma siento  
Que me lo llaméis, señor -  
¿Cómo, si soy sangre vuestra,  
Mi deshonor procuráis?  
--Y así, Marqués, perdonad.  
Y pues a mi casa a honrarme  
No venís, el visitarme  
De aquí en adelante excusad. II, 3

It is not necessary to offer here a further accumulation of facts in substantiation of points outlined in previous chapters. Such facts are readily available and will support the contention made earlier that subject matter, character and ideas used by Alarcón were Spanish in nature and in origin. Seventeenth century Spain was the stage upon which Alarcón's characters moved and expressed their feelings, it furnished the background and the source for his material and his method.

## CONCLUSION

The life of Juan Ruíz de Alarcón is particularly pertinent to an interpretation of his comedias. Character study was his best medium of expression, and through it we find many traces of the battles which he himself waged against poverty and discouragement. It is necessary in reading his comedias to take into account not only his physical deformity with its resultant unhappiness, but also his craving for attention. Alarcón was not content to remain un-noticed and made many attempts to enter Spain's political and literary world. This he could not do by virtue of his personality, nor did he have sufficient material means to enable him to continue for long his pretensiones.

The comedia de carácter offered both an answer to his financial problems and a reply to his critics. In it he set forth convictions and desires, combining with them a large measure of self defense. Nobility of soul became his creed, slander his obsession and recognition his goal.

As he shaped his comedia, Alarcón was forced to follow the general pattern of the comedia of the seventeenth century, at the same time differing sufficiently therein to

attract the desired notice. It was impossible for him to dislodge from public favor the well established elements of the comedia as conceived by Lope de Vega. Consequently he had to make use of them while developing the character study more suitable to his serious and logical mind.

The field of intrigue brought him little but failure, because he did not have the flexible genius or nationalistic spirit of Lope, nor the satirical ability of Tirso. In his comedias de carácter he found a success which was proportionate with his subjectivity. His best plays were the ones in which he outlined his own strong feelings of moral integrity and the superiority of mind over matter, personifying them by means of characters.

These are the comedias to which have been ascribed in most cases a classical background and the influence of Plautus and Terence. An investigation of the comedies of Plautus has shown that this Latin poet wrote solely for the sake of amusement, deliberately choosing immoral characters and situations. Theme and plot construction were minor considerations with him and he cared not a whit for moralizations per se. He produced a sparkling, rowdy farce, a burlesque enacted by the members of his rogue's gallery, no trace of which is visible in the staid and polemical Alarcón.

Mr. Charles H. Stevens, in a study of the Menaechmi theme as relative to Lope de Vega and other

seventeenth century dramatists, sees in the Italian play Calandra the real introduction of this theme of mistaken identity. Making its appearance at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Calandra was responsible for a great deal of the popularity ascribed to Plautus' comedy. The Italian play makes one of the twins a girl, each of the twins dresses like the other, with ensuing problems of love interest. This difference in sex produced the situation which has so greatly influenced Spanish writers and which is entirely different from the one described by Plautus. "It is, then, the Calandra of Bibbiena and its later off-shoots rather than the Menaechmi of Plautus which serve more frequently as the point of departure for the later development of the masquerading twins."<sup>1</sup>

In his comedias de carácter Alarcón has been likened to Terence in moral purpose, character study, structure and technique. Terence did not advance a thesis nor preach a moral. He sought to refine comedy and give it polish and elegance. His real purpose was to produce accurate translations of the comedy of Menander, at the same time perfecting his own balance of plot and characters. In so doing he suggests the ideas of compromise and sympathy for human weakness. This is not the attitude of Alarcón. For him, nobility of soul must function as a direct challenge to the weaknesses of hypocrisy and deceit. His characters

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1. Stevens, Charles H., Lope de Vega's El palacio confuso, New York, 1939, Introduction, also p. xv.

are not the types set by Terence, they portray himself, his enemies, and the world of longing and frustration in which he lived.

Actual structure and technique of the comedia is a seventeenth century riddle and cannot be solved short of a detailed investigation of versification, plot development and characterization. Mr. Morley, who has done much of this study, is of the opinion that Lope's idea of structure was the one which governed his contemporaries. It is certain that Alarcón insists upon Spanish traits such as the pundonor with its far reaching effects, nobility of the galán, the inalienable rights of the king, a criado who reflects the life and love affairs of his master, and the repeated use of the popular refrán. Also the conventional and very stereotyped portrayal of amor y celos which develops automatically in the comedia and seldom conforms with any logical or psychological character study. The unity of place is not observed by Alarcón; the unity of action he achieves only in La verdad sospechosa and Las paredes oyen; the unity of time, twenty-four hours as interpreted by commentators of Aristotle, such as Castelvetro, is kept only in El examen de maridos and Mudarse por mejorarse.

It is doubtful whether Alarcón consciously imitated the Latin Classic writers. His acquaintance with them was extensive, but he shows no direct borrowing. His "sobriety of diction" might have come from Terence, but it

may also have been a product of his dogmatic mind and legal training. Alarcón's seriousness of purpose far surpassed that of Terence, whose wish it was to produce good comedy, and became a complex structure of resentment and ambition.

Señor Abreu Gómez comments that habrá de verse a Lope, para explicar a Alarcón.<sup>2</sup> Such is the conclusion offered by this study.. From the Classics, Alarcón transferred no more than a tendency to restrict and simplify his action, and an attention to character study. Beyond this, the Classics can not claim him. His is a seventeenth century comedia, his characters are seventeenth century Spaniards, his dialogue a more serious edition of Lope de Vega, his morals a challenge to his enemies and a defense of his misfortune. He follows the rules of the romantic theatre of his time, even in his subjectivity. Throughout Alarcón's plays, tying together the scenes, controlling the characters and the action, runs that vital current of dramatic Spain, the pundonor. Flowing through the heart of his comedias, filling them with action and vigor, is the blood of the Spanish caballero. Juan Ruíz de Alarcón, like other writers of the Spanish comedia, is deeply indebted to that great master Lope de Vega.

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2. Abreu Gómez, Ruíz de Alarcón, Bibliografía crítica, Mexico, 1939, p. 23.

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